

# ASPECTS OF NATO

Series 1

Nº 2

## Civil Organisation

### What is the Council?

The North Atlantic Council, established by Article 9 of the Treaty, is the principal body of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Its basic task is to assist the member nations in implementing the Treaty and, particularly, in attaining the Treaty's basic objective – the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council's terms of reference could not be more simple – they are the North Atlantic Treaty itself.

The Chairman of the Council is the Secretary General and its Secretary, the Executive Secretary.

The Council meets at various levels – Permanent Representatives, Foreign Ministers or, on occasion, Heads of State or Government – but at whatever level it should meet it remains the NATO Council, and its decisions have equal validity. NATO is not a supranational organisation, for all of the fifteen sovereign member countries have the equal right to express their views around the Council table and agreement by common consent is the rule; there is no voting or majority decision. Council decisions adopted become binding and can only be reversed by the Council itself.

When it meets at the level of Permanent Representatives, it is known as the Council in permanent session. As a general rule, it meets twice a year at the level of Foreign Ministers, once in Brussels and once in a capital of a member nation. On occasion, Defence and Finance Ministers have also attended these meetings. On five occasions (1957, 1974, 1975, 1977 and 1978) it has met at the level of Heads of Government or State.

Each government appoints a Permanent Representative of ambassadorial rank supported by staffs which vary in size. The role of the Permanent Representatives is to act, under instructions from their capitals, as spokesmen for their governments. In a reciprocal way, they are also the spokesmen of the Council with their governments. Permanent Representatives represent not only their Foreign Minister but all ministers concerned in the Alliance's business.

The Council provides a unique forum for confidential, constant and timely inter-governmental consultation. In some ways, it may be compared to a standing committee of governments or to a "diplomatic workshop". To attain such a high degree of consultation between the fifteen member nations by the customary method of bilateral political exchanges would be quite impracticable - in fact, every time the Council meets it provides the equivalent of over 100 bilateral exchanges. It is also significant that there is no other forum in which the two North American countries and

thirteen European countries, including nine of the ten EEC nations, can meet formally at least once a week and informally as often as they wish as members of one and the same institution to exchange views on current affairs.

To carry out its functions, the Council has set up a large number of subsidiary committees which, at various levels, prepare the work of the Council or implement its directives. All these committees, be they civil or military, act for and under the authority of the Council.

### **Its genesis**

The structure of the Council has been modified in a number of ways since the institution of the Alliance. In September 1949, it was decided that the Council would be composed of the Foreign Ministers of member countries and would meet once a year in ordinary session. At the same date, a Defence Committee, composed of the Defence Ministers, was also set up and it was agreed that it would also meet once a year. Then, in November 1949, a Defence Financial and Economic Committee, composed of Finance Ministers, was established.

This system proved too cumbersome to deal with day-to-day problems, and it was decided in 1950 to institute the "Council Deputies", a quasi-permanent body based in London, charged with the execution of the Council's directives and the coordination of the military and civil activities of the Alliance. Following the suppression in 1951 of the Defence Committee and of the Defence Financial and Economic Committee, the role of the Council Deputies was enhanced and began to acquire some of the characteristics of the North Atlantic Council as it now exists. A further change was made at the Lisbon Ministerial Meeting in 1952; this change was of a more radical nature, directed at the creation of a genuinely permanent body, which, broadly speaking, has remained unchanged since that date.

### **How It works**

As a general rule, the Council in permanent session meets every Wednesday, but in practice it meets much more frequently and as often as four or five times a week when circumstances require it. In fact, the Council may be convened at any time of the day or night and on any day. Arrangements have been made through a duty officers system to enable the Council to meet at about two hours' notice.

Almost all Council meetings begin with the same item called "Statements on Political Subjects". Under this item, Permanent Representatives are able to raise and discuss, in a restricted forum, topical matters of interest to the Alliance; it is a practical feature of the political consultation process. No official records are kept of these discussions, in order to foster free and uninhibited exchanges. Whenever necessary, private meetings are held with an even more restricted attendance to allow for complete informality and confidentiality.

The other items which come to the Council for discussion and decision cover all aspects of the Organisation's activities, and are based on documents prepared by the Council's subordinate committees. These documents contain

recommendations which are then adopted unchanged or modified by the Council itself to reconcile divergent views and arrive at a consensus.

Each year, the Foreign Minister of a member state is elected President of the Council; the selection follows the English alphabetical order of countries.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Defence Planning Committee (DPC)**

Defence matters are dealt with in the Defence Planning Committee, composed of representatives of the member nations participating in the NATO integrated defence structure. Within the specialised field of defence, the DPC has, for all practical purposes, the same functions and authority as the Council. Like the Council, it meets regularly at ambassadorial level and assembles twice a year in ministerial sessions when the nations are represented by their Defence Ministers.

### **The Secretary General**

Chairman of the North Atlantic Council and the Defence Planning Committee, the Secretary General is also Chairman of the Nuclear Defence Affairs Committee, the Nuclear Planning Group, the Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society and the titular Chairman of certain other senior committees. He also has responsibility for the direction of the International Staff. The Deputy Secretary General assists the Secretary General in the exercise of his functions and replaces him in his absence. The work of the International Staff is organised as follows.

### **The Office of the Secretary General**

The Secretary General has under his direct control a "Private Office" and "The Office of the Secretary General", composed of the Executive Secretariat, the Office of Security, and the Office of the Legal Adviser.

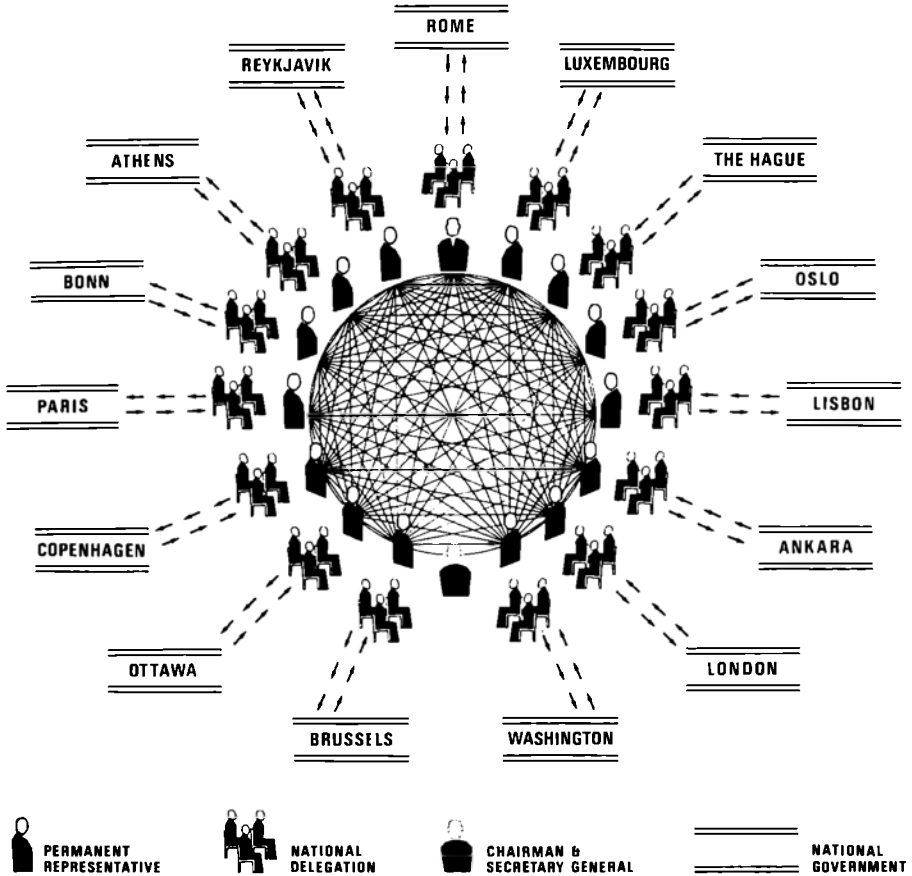
The Private Office supports the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General in all aspects of their work.

The Executive Secretary is Secretary to the Council and the Defence Planning Committee. He is responsible for preparing the work of the Council and the Defence Planning Committee and their subordinate committees, recording the proceedings of meetings and following up decisions. The Deputy Executive Secretary is Secretary to the Nuclear Defence Affairs Committee and the Nuclear Planning Group. The Executive Secretariat provides the secretaries for the main committees and working groups of the Organisation and thus ensures coordination between them.

The Office of Security coordinates, monitors and implements NATO security policy. The Director of Security is the Secretary General's principal security adviser, Chairman of the NATO Security Committee, and directs the NATO Headquarters Security Service.

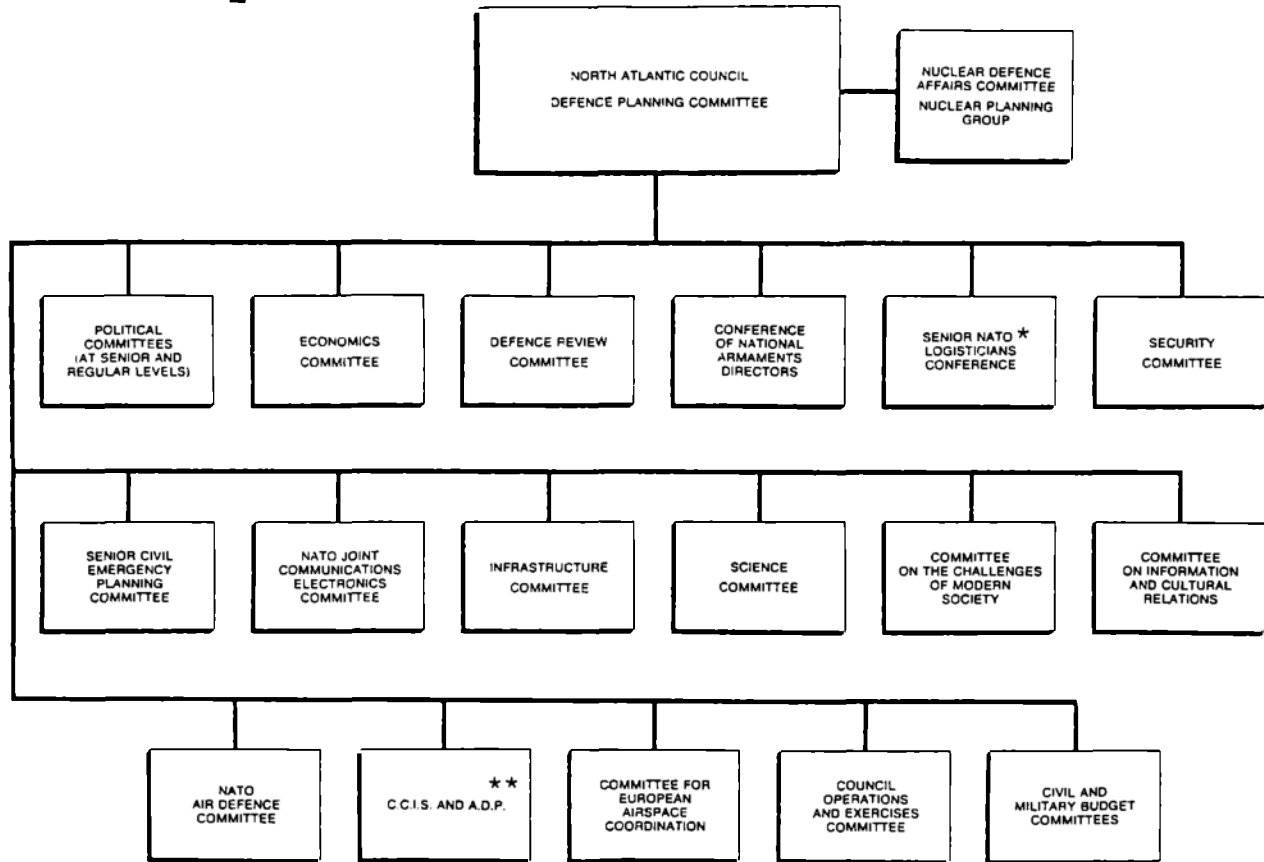
The Office of the Legal Adviser provides advice on the legal aspects of all matters affecting the Organisation.

# The North Atlantic Council



The North Atlantic Council provides a unique forum for confidential and constant intergovernmental consultation on all topics as well as providing the highest level of decision-making machinery within NATO. There is no supra-national element in the Organisation and all the fifteen sovereign member countries have an equal right to express their views round the Council table. Political consultation ranges over the whole field of foreign affairs and is not limited to NATO's geographical area. The only topics excluded are those relating to the purely internal affairs of member countries. Each national delegation is headed by a Permanent Representative with the rank of ambassador supported by staffs which vary in size. All act on instructions from their capitals. Thus the Council provides a unique type of diplomatic workshop under the Chairmanship of the Secretary General. To attain such a high degree of constant consultation between the fifteen by the customary method of bilateral diplomatic exchanges would be quite impracticable – in fact each meeting of the Council represents the equivalent of over 100 bilateral exchanges as shown by the lines in the diagram above.

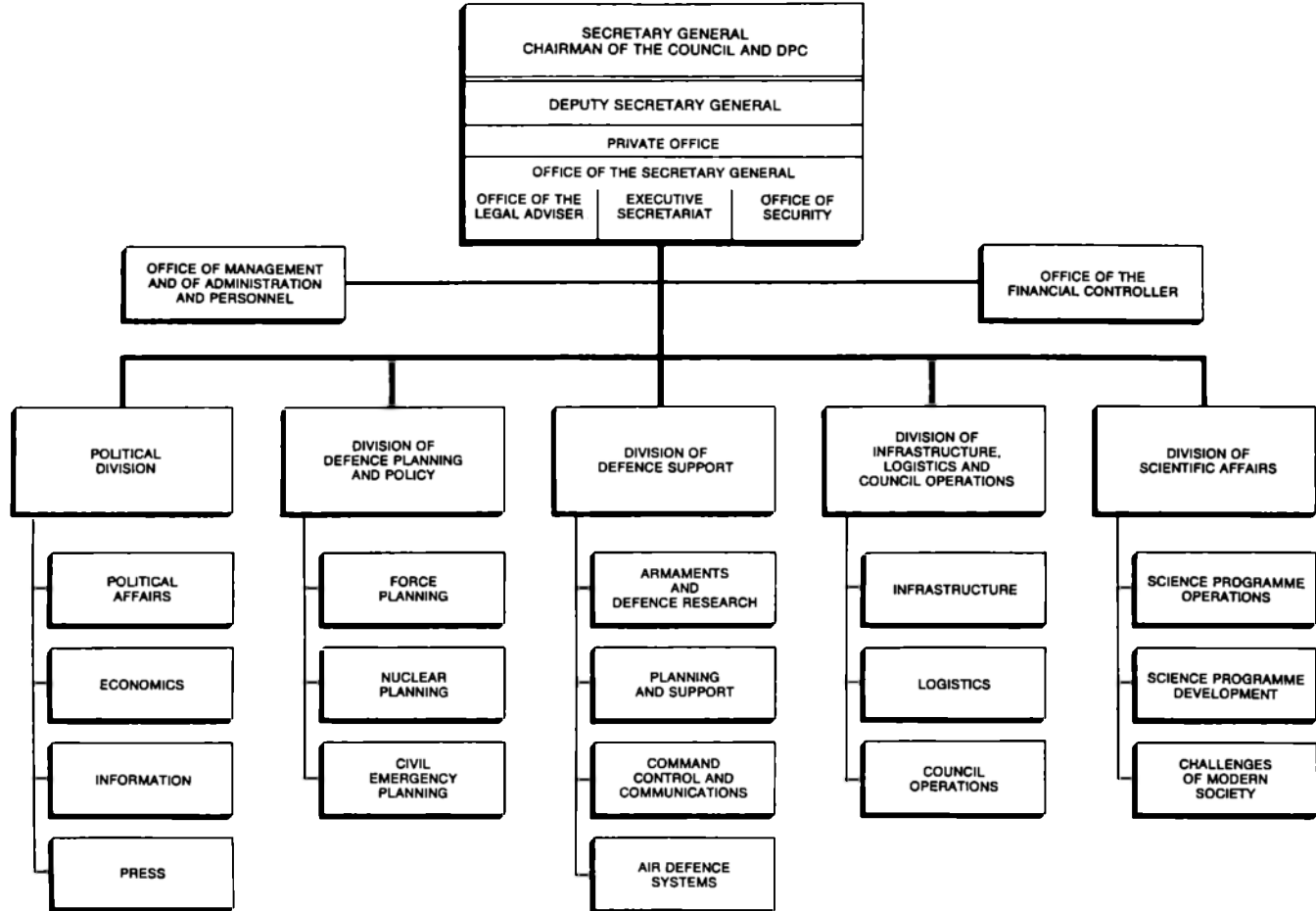
# Principal Committees of the Council



\* The SNCL is a joint Civil/Military Committee which reports both to the Council or Defence Planning Committee and to the Military Committee.

\*\* Command, Control and Information Systems and Automatic Data Processing Committee.

# NATO International Staff



## **Political Affairs Division**

Under the Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs, who is Chairman of the Political Committees, the Political Division is organised in three separate Directorates – Political Affairs, Economics, and Information – and a Press Service.

– The Political Affairs Directorate has the following responsibilities:

- (a) preparation of the political discussions of the Council and of the discussions of the Political Committee at regular and senior level;
- (b) preparation of notes and reports on political subjects for the Secretary General and the Council;
- (c) political liaison with the delegations of member countries;
- (d) liaison with other international organisations, both governmental and non-governmental.

– The Economics Directorate carries out similar functions with regard to all economic questions having political or defence implications of concern to NATO, and maintains contacts with international economic organisations. The Director is Chairman of the Economics Committee.

– The Information Directorate has the task of informing public opinion about the aims and achievements of the Atlantic Alliance. It assists member governments to widen public understanding of NATO activities through the medium of publications, films, radio and TV programmes and exhibitions. It also arranges for group visits to NATO Headquarters, for briefings, and participates in the organisation of special courses and seminars on NATO matters, particularly for young people. The Director is Chairman of the Committee on Information and Cultural Relations. He takes the chair at the Conference of National Information Officials and also chairs an annual meeting of Ministry of Defence Information Officers. The Directorate includes a Library and Documentation Service.

– The Press Service: the Head of the Press Service is the official spokesman for NATO in contacts with the press. He is also responsible for the circulation of news files and press reviews to the International Staff and to national delegations.

## **Defence Planning and Policy Division**

The Assistant Secretary General for Defence Planning and Policy is Chairman of the Defence Review Committee (DRC), Chairman of the "Alerts" Committee, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group on Military Assistance to Portugal and Turkey, Deputy Chairman of the Executive Working Group (EWG) and Deputy Chairman of the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee (SCEPC); he also supervises the work of the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) Staff Group.

The Division is organised into three Directorates:

– Directorate of Force Planning and Policy – responsible for the preparation, in collaboration with national delegations, of all papers and business concerned with the Defence Review, including the analysis of national defence programmes; for other matters of a politico-military and military-economic nature considered by the Defence Planning Committee; for the preparation of

studies of general or particular aspects of NATO defence on behalf of the Executive Working Group; and for the maintenance of a computerised data base of information on NATO and Warsaw Pact forces;

- Directorate of Nuclear Planning – responsible for coordination of work on the development of NATO defence policy in the nuclear field and with the preparation of business for the Nuclear Planning Group and the Nuclear Defence Affairs Committee;

- Directorate of Civil Emergency Planning – responsible for coordination of plans for the use of civil resources in support of the Alliance defence effort; the rapid transition of peacetime economies to an emergency footing; and for the preparation of business in this field for the North Atlantic Council and other bodies.

The Assistant Secretary General for Defence Planning and Policy is responsible for providing advice to the Secretary General on all these matters and for maintaining liaison with national delegations, the Military Authorities and other divisions of the International Staff, and with other organisations as appropriate.

### **Defence Support Division**

The Assistant Secretary General for Defence Support is the Permanent Chairman of the Conference of National Armaments Directors and advises the Secretary General, the North Atlantic Council, the Defence Planning Committee, the Military Committee, and any other NATO bodies on all matters related to armaments research, development, production and procurement, air defence systems, and command, control and communications systems. He is responsible for promoting cooperation amongst nations in harmonising the concepts and requirements for future equipment, and coordinating procurement and replacement plans, so as to facilitate greater standardisation and interoperability, and thereby promote the most efficient use of the resources of the Alliance for the equipment and support of its forces. He is also responsible for promoting international cooperation among industries in the defence equipment and armaments fields.

The Assistant Secretary General for Defence Support participates in all aspects of the defence planning process which are within the responsibility and competence of the Defence Support Division. His office also provides liaison with the NATO Production and Logistics Organisations concerned with the development, production and installation of equipments and systems.

The Defence Support Division is organised in four Directorates:

- Directorate of Armaments and Defence Research: responsible for promoting cooperation amongst nations in harmonising the concepts and requirements for future army, airforce and naval weapon systems and equipment and harmonising procurement and replacement plans, so as to facilitate greater standardisation and commonality; encouraging coordination of national research, development and production programmes, and of rationalisation of national research, development, production and logistic capabilities so as to improve the efficiency of resource utilisation; organising systematic exchanges



of information to support better national decision-making and to facilitate international cooperation in defence equipment and its support.

- Directorate of Command, Control and Communications: responsible for encouraging cooperative programmes in communications and electronics; for the coordination of the overall policy aspects of NATO's civil and military communications; for providing support to the Management Agency responsible for the establishment of the NATO Integrated Communications System (NICSMA) and to the NATO Joint Communications-Electronics Committee (also acting as the NICS Policy Committee); and advising the Council Operations and Exercise Committee and the Civil Communications Planning Committee.

- Directorate of Air Defence: responsible for promoting and coordinating efforts aimed at increasing the effectiveness and the efficiency of all components which collectively comprise the Alliance air defence capability, including the air command and control system and air defence weapons, and their interoperability with adjacent systems; for supporting the NATO Air Defence Committee (NADC) and its subordinate panels and committees dealing with technical, logistic, financial and equipment-related matters concerning the NATO air defence system; and for providing coordination with other NATO bodies dealing with related subjects.

- Directorate of Planning and Support: responsible for overall planning activities in support of armaments cooperation, including the development of procedures for the systematisation and rationalisation of armaments planning; for liaison with outside bodies, and for providing guidance, coordination and staff support to the activities of all NATO committees or bodies dealing with Defence Support matters, other than specific equipments or systems, including in particular material management, intellectual property and industrial advice and cooperation.

### **Infrastructure, Logistics and Council Operations Division**

The Assistant Secretary General for Infrastructure, Logistics and Council Operations, through three Directorates (Infrastructure, Logistics and Council Operations), has the following responsibilities:

- (a) advising the Secretary General, the North Atlantic Council, the Defence Planning Committee, and any other NATO bodies, as appropriate, on matters related to logistics and infrastructure and to Council operations;

- (b) promoting the most efficient use of the resources made available to the Alliance for the support of its forces; this task especially involves:

- encouraging cooperation amongst nations in the field of consumer logistics, in order to achieve greater efficiency and to increase combat effectiveness within the framework of the defence plans of the Alliance;
- encouraging rationalisation of national logistic capabilities so as to improve the efficiency of resource utilisation;
- organising systematic exchanges of information to support better national cooperation in the logistic support of NATO forces;

- (c) preparing proposals on policy issues relating to the future shape and size of NATO infrastructure programmes and their management;

(d) providing technical and financial supervision of the NATO infrastructure programmes;

(e) coordinating the operational aspects of the Council's activities, crisis management plans and arrangements; preparing and conducting high-level exercises and exercising, on behalf of the Council, Defence Planning Committee and the Secretary General, overall supervision of the NATO Situation Centre;

(f) ensuring liaison with the NATO Maintenance and Supply Organisation, the Central Europe Pipeline System, with other NATO production and logistics organisations and other NATO bodies where logistics or infrastructure matters arise;

(g) providing guidance, coordination and support to the activities of all NATO committees or bodies active in the field of consumer logistics and infrastructure and Council operations, and acting as co-Chairman, with the Deputy Chairman of the Military Committee, on behalf of the Secretary General, of the Joint Senior NATO Logisticians' Conference;

(h) participating in the NATO defence planning process on all matters within the responsibility and competence of the Division.

### **Scientific Affairs Division**

The Assistant Secretary General for Scientific and Environmental Affairs, who is the Chairman of the Science Committee and Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society (CCMS), in support of the Secretary General who is the Chairman, is responsible for:

(a) advising the Secretary General and the North Atlantic Council on scientific, technological and environmental matters related to the economic, political and security objectives of the Alliance;

(b) planning, developing, implementing and evaluating the international programme of the Science Committee and the CCMS;

(c) supervising a Division staff of professional scientists and engineers supported by advisory panels of experts in the administration of the NATO Science Programme;

(d) maintaining liaison in scientific, technological and environmental fields with senior officials responsible for policy and programme planning, development and implementation in member countries; with NATO civil and military authorities, and with international organisations operating scientific and environmental programmes.

### **Office of Management and of Administration and Personnel**

The Director of Management is responsible for all matters pertaining to the organisation and structure of the International Staff. He advises the Secretary General on staff policy and emoluments for international civilian personnel throughout the Organisation, and is charged with the preparation and presentation of the International Staff budgets. He supervises the activities of the Management Advisory Unit.

The Statistics Service, which comes under the Director of Management, is responsible for the organisation and direction of statistical studies, and in particular those required to assess the NATO defence effort.

The Deputy Director of Management is the head of the Office of Administration and Personnel, which is responsible for the general administration of the International Staff and of the Headquarters. It consists of the personnel services; the conference services, including interpretation, translation and document reproduction; and the building maintenance service.

### **Financial control**

The Financial Controller is appointed by the Council and is responsible for the control of expenditures within the framework of the budgets.

### **International Board of Auditors**

The accounts of the various NATO bodies and the accounts relating to commonly financed NATO infrastructure works are audited by the International Board of Auditors for NATO.

