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OTAN/NATO, 1110 Bruxelles ■ Telephones : 41.00.40 - 41.44.00 - 41.44.90

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BACKGROUND NOTE FOR THE PRESS

Meeting of NATO Science Committee

The NATO Science Committee completed its 45th meeting at NATO Headquarters in Brussels last week, under the chairmanship of Gunnar Randers, the Assistant Secretary General for Scientific Affairs. The scientists and science administrators representing the Alliance members examined reports on the several aspects of their programme which provides some 250 million Belgian francs annually to the support of scientific research, training and communication.

Hallmarks of the Committee's programmes, which are generally at the leading edge of science, are the emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches and international collaboration. Among the topics treated in the 1973 programme of fifty-three "Advanced Study Institutes" - the NATO name for two-to-three-week summer schools conducted in various member countries - are subjects such as Large Scale Applications of Superconductivity and Magnetism, dealing with the materials and principles applicable to new solutions for energy generation, power transmission and transportation; Computer Representation and Manipulation of Chemical Information, including the use of structural and property data for design of chemical reactions and theories; Generic Techniques in Systems Reliability Assessment; and the Properties and Application of Charged Gels and Membranes.

Research Grants, permitting collaborative work between investigators in two or more countries, pertain to a joint U.K. - Portuguese project on Turbulent Mixing of Co-Axial Jets, a U.S.-Netherlands project on Laser-Induced Fluorescence and a U.S.-Italian project on phase Transformation in Zirconium-Niobium Alloys, among some 80 others.

The Committee noted with satisfaction its programme of specialized conferences in areas of Human Factors (e.g. Determinants and Origins of Aggressive Behaviour) Ecological Sciences (e.g. Environmental Data Processing Systems) and Operational Research (e.g. Statistical Design of Experiments for Field Trials). It expressed particular pleasure at the outcome of the Science Committee Conference on Catalysis - one of a series of working meetings specifically designed to identify gaps in existing knowledge and the research paths necessary to fill these gaps. Experts from the three

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areas of Heterogeneous, Homogeneous and Metalloenzyme catalysis exchanged views on the techniques and theories predominant in their areas. The next meeting in this series will be held in June 1973, on Mathematical Modelling of Marine Systems, and the Committee approved plans for a 1974 meeting on the Movement of Persistent Organic Materials and Heavy Metals through the Eco-System.

The Committee laid plans for receiving reports from its several Advisory Groups, composed of eminent scientists serving as individuals rather than governmental representatives, which ensure the objective peer-judgement necessary to maintain confidence in the high quality of the scientific work. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 21-23 May, 1973, in Brussels.