

## PRESS - INFO - PRESS

# REFORM OF NATO'S INTEGRATED MILITARY COMMAND STRUCTURE

---

The role of the integrated military structure is to provide the organisational framework for fulfilling the military responsibilities and undertaking the military tasks given to the Alliance by its member governments.

Some of those tasks have to do with the basic obligation of the Alliance to defend its member countries against threats to their security, in accordance with Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

Others relate to the implementation of the Alliance's new missions, that is, discretionary operations beyond those required by the commitment to collective defence of Article 5.

NATO has very few permanent military forces and only relatively small integrated, multinational staffs at the various military headquarters and agencies which make up the integrated military command structure. The majority of so-called "NATO Forces" are forces which remain under national control and only become available to the Alliance in specific circumstances. They are then placed under the responsibility of NATO military commanders. The integrated military command structure is the agreed basis for organising, training and controlling these forces.

The new security environment has allowed NATO countries to reorganise their forces. In most cases this has meant cutting back conventional ground, air and naval forces by 30% to 40%, introducing major reductions in nuclear weapons and reducing levels of readiness.

They have also endorsed a blueprint for developing a new NATO military command structure designed to enable the Alliance to carry out the whole range of its missions more effectively, including crisis management, peace-keeping or other peace support operations.

The new structure will comprise two Strategic Commands (SCs) - one for the Atlantic and one for Europe - with a simplified subordinate structure of regional and sub-regional commands.

There will be a reduction in the number of command headquarters located in different member countries, from the current 65 to 20. The result will be a structure which is more flexible and better adapted to NATO's present-day requirements. Cooperation between NATO and its partner countries will be facilitated. Moreover, a framework will be provided within it for commanding operations involving rapidly deployable, multi-national, multi-service units adapted to the requirements of the Alliance's Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) concept.

The transition to the new command structure is a complex process, calling for new headquarters to be activated and former headquarters to be deactivated in a coordinated way, while ensuring that there is no overall reduction in the operational effectiveness of the Alliance. The whole process has to be managed within existing resource limitations and will not be fully implemented before the year 2003.