Our role, as NATO’s International Military Staff, is to provide the best possible strategic military advice and staff support for the Military Committee.

In upholding a reputation for excellence, our vision is that we will be widely respected as a highly motivated, properly trained and empowered team that is well-led and cared for at all levels and which always displays intellectual agility, decisiveness and pride.

The IMS team embraces the principles and values enshrined in ‘People first, Mission always.’ Our people work with professionalism, integrity and commitment. They also promote continuous learning and the need for resilience, initiative and open communication in an environment in which each individual is respected and that is totally free from discrimination and prejudice.

Following the Heads of State and Government direction at the Chicago Summit, a review of the IMS was initiated. While major structural and organizational changes are not likely, it will be important that the IMS is reconfigured and its ‘ways of working’ are adapted to reflect Future NATO and the move to the new NATO HQ.
The International Military Staff (IMS)

The IMS is the executive body of the Military Committee (MC), NATO’s senior military authority. It is responsible for preparing assessments and studies on NATO military issues identifying areas of strategic and operational interest and proposing courses of action. It also ensures that NATO decisions and policies on military matters are implemented by the appropriate NATO military authorities.

The IMS’s work enables NATO’s Military Representatives to deal with issues rapidly and effectively, ensuring that the IMS provides the North Atlantic Council (NAC) with consensus based on advice on all military aspects of policy, operations, and transformation within the Alliance.

The IMS is an independent body within NATO that comprises approximately 50 dedicated military and civilian personnel from NATO’s member states, working in an impartial capacity for the common interest of the Alliance, rather than on behalf of their country of origin.

The strength of the IMS lies in exchanging information and views with the staffs of the Military Representatives, the civilian International Staff (IS), the Strategic Commanders, multinational Working Groups, and NATO Agencies, ensuring effective and efficient staff work.

The Director General of the International Military Staff (DGIMS)

The IMS is led by the DGIMS, a General/Flag officer, selected by the NATO Chiefs of Defence from candidates nominated by Member Nations. The DGIMS is responsible for the coordination between the decision-making bodies of the Alliance, the two Strategic Commanders, national military delegations from NATO and Partner countries working in Brussels, and the civilian International Staff, that support the Secretary General and the NAC, in order for the IMS to provide the best possible policy advice to the MC.

The DGIMS reports to the Chairman of the MC (CJM), takes part in all MC meetings (both in Chiefs of Defence format and the meetings in Permanent Session), also attending the NAC, in order for the IMS to provide the best possible policy advice to the MC.

The current DGIMS is Air Marshal Sir Christopher Harper, UK Air Force.

Current NATO Operations

Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in Afghanistan

On January 1st, 2015, NATO assumed a new chapter in its relationship with Afghanistan. The new RESOLUTE SUPPORT Mission’s main focus is to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces. This new mission’s lead mission is designated from the ISAF era and one that the mission is significantly smaller in size. RESOLUTE SUPPORT focuses on eight essential functions: strategy and policy planning, resource and execution, budgeting, personnel management, force generation and sustainability, and transparency, accountability and oversight, among other functions necessary to help the Afghan security forces, security ministries and institutions as well as the higher levels of the Afghan army and defence develop the processes and mechanisms they need to become sustainable in the long term. RESOLUTE SUPPORT operates in Kabul and four other locations: Mazar-i-Sharif (north), Herat (west), Kandahar (south) and Logar (east).

Kosovo Force (KFOR)

Since June 1999, NATO has led a peacekeeping operation in Kosovo. Initially consisting of 5,000 troops following the March 1999 air campaign, the force now numbers around 5,190 NATO and Partner Nations contribution.

NATO also deploys Force Protection of the Somali Basin, providing support to the Somali National Army and the International Navy Task Force (ISAF), and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), in support of the Somali National Army and the international Navy Task Force.

The Organization of the IMS

The Intelligence (INTEL) Division provides intelligence support to all NATO HQ elements, NATO member states and NATO Commands. The Division provides strategic warning and situation awareness to all NATO HQ elements. Its core activities are: developing a NATO Intelligence framework, architecture and intelligence capabilities; providing customer oriented policies to NATO Agencies and Intelligence Assessments; advising on intelligence sharing matters and conducting intelligence liaison activities.

The Plans & Policy (P&P) Division is involved in all policy and planning matters such as Alliance defence policy and strategic planning. This division supports and gives military advice to the DGIMS and the Chairman of the MC especially in the following areas: Strategic Policy and Concept; Nuclear Deterrence and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Policy; Force and Defence Planning.

The Cooperation & Regional Security (C&RS) Division develops military Cooperative Security Policy and is the main point of contact for NATO Operations with Partners from the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and Partnership for Peace, Mediterranean Dialogue, Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and with Partners Across the Globe. Additionally, C&RS is the main military contact with all non-NATO member states who conduct operations with the Alliance.

The Logistics & Resources (LR) Division develops and defines policies and principles, plans and concepts on all matters concerning logistics, medical, armaments, research and development, and civil emergency planning. In addition, the Division is the focal point for NATO’s military manpower, financial resources and security investment issues.

The NATO National Security Council (NSC)

The Situation Centre (SITCEN) serves as the focal point within the Alliance for the receipt, exchange and dissemination of information. It monitors political, military and economic matters of interest to NATO and partner countries and not partner countries on a 24-hour basis. The SITCEN also provides facilities for the rapid expansion of consultation during periods of tension or crisis.