

# NATO's Military Committee

focused on operations, capabilities, cooperation, and transformation



1531-15 NATO Graphics & Printing



Operation ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR is NATO's maritime surveillance and escort operation in the fight against terrorism. Based in the Mediterranean Sea, the force, which is provided by several Nations and partners, has hailed more than 115,000 vessels.



Conducting counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa under Operation OCEAN SHIELD.

## The Military Committee oversees several operations and missions including:

- RESOLUTE SUPPORT Mission (RSM) in Afghanistan. On January 1st 2015, NATO opened a new chapter in its relationship with Afghanistan. The RESOLUTE SUPPORT Mission's main focus is to train, advise and assist the Afghan Security Forces. This NATO-led mission is different from the ISAF one and the force is significantly smaller in size. RESOLUTE SUPPORT focuses on eight essential functions: strategy and policy planning, resourcing and execution; budgeting; personnel management; force generation and sustainment; and transparency, accountability and oversight. In all those areas, the objectives are to help the Afghan security forces, security ministries and institutions as well as the higher levels of the Afghan army and police 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 Laghman (east).
- KOSOVO FORCE (KFOR). Since June 1999, NATO has led a peacekeeping operation in Kosovo. Initially composed of 50,000 troops following the March 1999 air campaign, the force now numbers about 5,100 consisting of NATO member and Partner Nation contributions.
- Operation OCEAN SHIELD (OOS). The Alliance's counter piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden and the Somali Basin is being conducted with several ships and air assets, in close coordination with many international actors.
- Operation ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR (OAE). The Alliance's only Article V mission, conducts counter terrorism operations in the Mediterranean with the participation of Partner Nations and the increasing involvement of the Mediterranean Dialogue countries.
- NATO deployment of Patriot Missiles to Turkey. Six Patriot missile batteries are currently operating under NATO command and control in Southern Turkey in order to augment Turkey's air defence capabilities to defend its population and territory.
- NATO also provides assistance to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and capacity building support to its long-term peacekeeping capabilities, in particular the African Standby Force.
- NATO Air Policing missions in the Baltic States and the Balkans contribute to the air space management by scrambling at short notice and take deterrent actions against trespassers.
- About 90 NATO military personnel in Sarajevo, Skopje and Belgrade also assist with defence and security reform.



## International Military Staff

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## The International Military Staff (IMS)

The IMS supports the Military Committee, with about 500 dedicated military and civilian personnel working in an international capacity for the common interest of the Alliance, rather than on behalf of their country of origin. Under the direction of the Director General, Air Marshal Sir Christopher Harper, the staff prepares assessments, evaluations and reports on all issues that form the basis of discussion and decisions in the Military Committee.

The IMS is also responsible for planning, assessing and recommending policy on military matters for consideration by the Military Committee, and for ensuring their policies and decisions are implemented as directed. This staff is the essential link 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 North Atlantic Council.



Zabul Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) personnel and 101st Airborne Division soldiers speak to village elders from Bowlan Kalay, Afghanistan, and are about to hand out humanitarian aid supplies.



Afghan children from the village of Sayad Pacha in southern Afghanistan use a water pump funded by the military's civil-military cooperation section.

## Six Functional Areas of the International Military Staff

### Plans and Policy

Responsible for strategic-level plans and policies, and defence/force planning, including working with Nations to determine national military levels of ambition regarding force goals and contributions to NATO.

### Operations

Closely tracks current operations, staffs operational planning, follows NATO exercises and training, and is responsible for issues involving NATO air defence.

### Cooperation and Regional Security

Main military contact with the 22 Partners in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC), the NATO-Georgia Commission (NGC), the 7 Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) Nations, the 4 Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) Nations, and with other non-member, non-Partner countries with whom NATO has relations or contact.

### Logistics and Resources

Responsible for all matters concerning logistics, armaments, research and development, medical, civil emergency planning, and management of Alliance military financial resources and personnel.

### Intelligence

Provides strategic intelligence support, including gathering, assessing and distributing intelligence received from member countries and NATO Commands.

### NATO Consultation, Command and Control

Gives advice on communications and information systems, standards, products and analysis.



## The Military Committee (MC)

**NATO's highest military authority** is composed of the Chiefs of Defence of all 28 member countries. They meet at least three times a year as a group. On a day-to-day basis, their work is carried out by permanent Military Representatives at NATO HQ in Brussels. They meet one to four times a week in formal and informal sessions to discuss, deliberate and act on matters of military importance, working in the best interests of the Alliance, while at the same time representing national perspectives and positions.

The Military Committee provides the North Atlantic Council (NAC), NATO's highest political authority, with consensus-based military advice - that is, advice agreed by all Chiefs of Defence. It works closely with the two Strategic Commanders to bring plans, issues and recommendations forward for political consideration. In turn, it gives clear military direction to the Strategic Commanders based on Military Committee and North Atlantic Council decisions.

The Military Committee represents a vast amount of specialized knowledge and experience that informs Alliance-wide military policies, strategies and plans, and is a key part of the NATO decision-making process.

<sup>1</sup> The overall planning and direction of all NATO operations rests with the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), who works from Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) Headquarters in Mons, Belgium. Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT), working from Norfolk, U.S., is responsible for enhancing NATO military capabilities, developing concepts, policies, and joint NATO training.

## The Role of the Chairman

**The Chairman of the Military Committee** is elected by the NATO Chiefs of Defence, normally for a three-year term. He represents their consensus-based views as the principal military adviser to the Secretary General, the North Atlantic Council and other senior NATO organisations. He guides the Military Committee's agenda and deliberations, listening to views and working to reconcile divergent national positions or policy differences to fashion advice that all can agree to. Each Nation has an equal voice in the discussion and decisions, as all Member Nations provide the personnel and the financial resources needed to conduct NATO operations and other activities.

As the Alliance's top officer and most senior military spokesperson, General Petr Pavel (Czech Army), the current Chairman, regularly visits operations and Allied and Partner countries to explain NATO's role and military work and to maximize NATO military capabilities and efficiencies. He is assisted by the Deputy Chairman, Lt. General Mark O. Schissler (US Air Force).



General Petr Pavel, the current Chairman of the Military Committee, is the most senior military authority of the Alliance. Nominated by NATO's Chiefs of Defence, he chairs all the meetings of the Military Committee and acts in an international capacity. NATO's Chiefs of Defence meet at least three times a year, and on a day-to-day basis work through permanent Military Representatives in NATO HQ in Brussels.



The Military Committee's principal role is to provide direction and advice on military policy and strategy. It is responsible for recommending to NATO's political authorities those measures considered necessary for the common defence of the NATO area and for the implementation of decisions regarding NATO's operations and missions.



General Petr Pavel, Chairman of NATO's Military Committee (right) meets General Philip Breedlove, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (left).

## Six steps to agreed military advice

When NATO political authorities are considering military action, a critical part of the information needed to reach informed decisions that all Nations can agree to comes from its military authorities. The North Atlantic Council receives regular briefings and reports, and at each key stage the Military Committee is called on to give advice and to provide direction to NATO Military Authorities (NMAs).

**Step ①.** The North Atlantic Council tasks the Military Committee to produce military advice that can be agreed by all 28 NATO Chiefs of Defence.

**Step ②.** The International Military Staff, in support of the Military Committee, translates the political guidance into military direction and tasks one or both Strategic Commands for their best military advice on how to organise and conduct what has been asked for, including an assessment of the personnel and financial resources required.

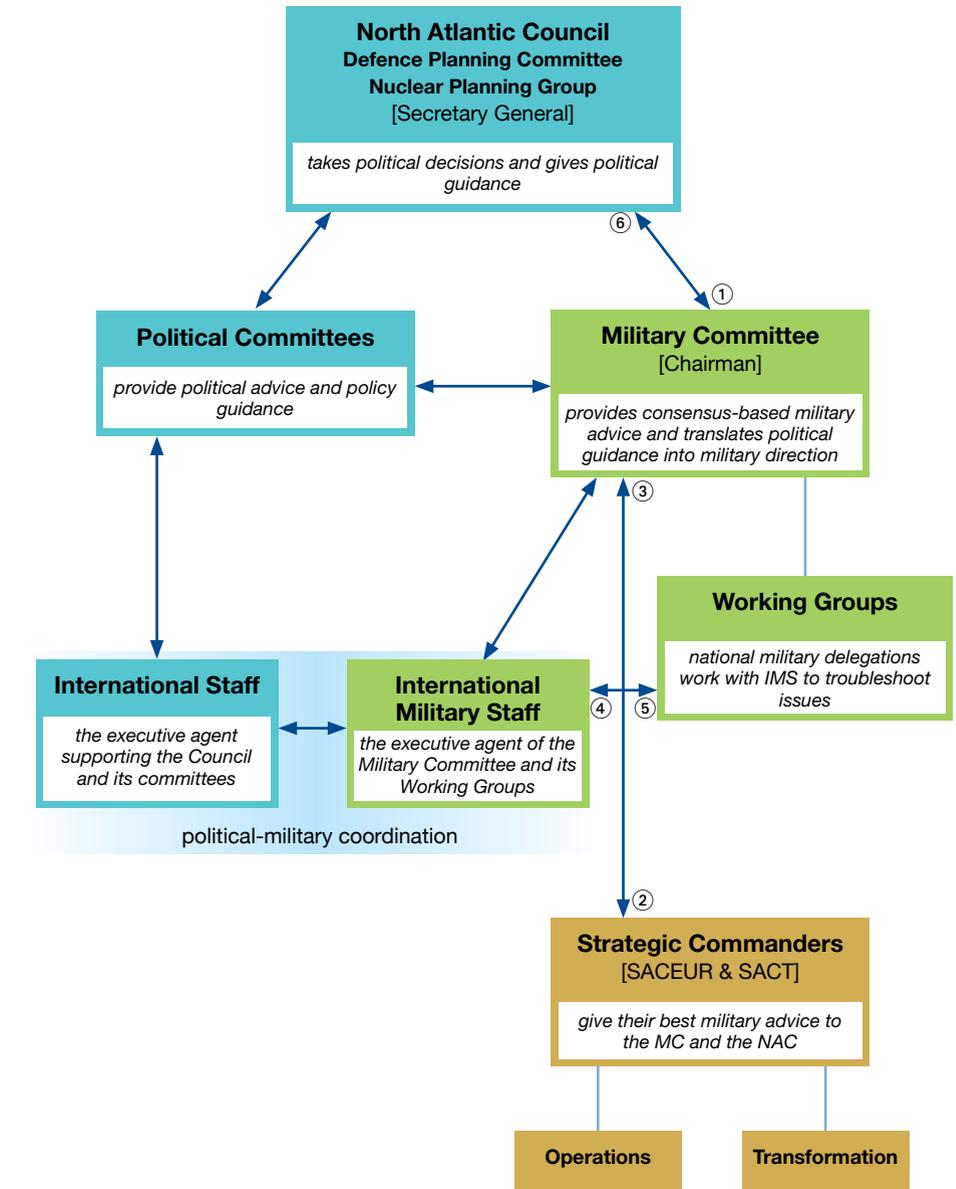
**Step ③.** The input from the Strategic Command(s) is provided to the Military Committee (i.e. to the Nations) for consideration, usually with an initial assessment by the International Military Staff.

**Step ④.** The Military Representatives provide their response and advice from a national standpoint. The 28 views need to converge into consensus advice that can be passed on to the North Atlantic Council.

**Step ⑤.** Working groups meet regularly to troubleshoot and work through issues as consensus is not always achieved immediately on complex undertakings. Staff from national military delegations work with subject matter experts under an International Military Staff (IMS) Chairperson.

**Step ⑥.** The final agreed product, together with the initial advice from the Strategic Command(s), is then sent to the North Atlantic Council to inform their deliberations, consultations and decision-making. This is a continuous process for every activity, be it an operational plan, a conceptual paper or a policy proposal.

## The NATO Military Decision-Making Process



Two-way arrows show continuous circle of consultation and guidance.