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Equal Partners, Though Not Of Equal Strength

The Military Diplomacy of General Charles Foulkes and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Michael W. Manulak

Students of Canadian foreign policy learn extensively of the pioneering role politicians and diplomats like Louis St. Laurent, Lester Pearson, and Hume Wrong played in realizing the North Atlantic Treaty in April 1949. There is a large literature that tells the story of an influential Canadian diplomacy that coaxed a reluctant US government toward supporting European security. Perhaps because military officials are often less inclined to publish memoirs, the military side of the negotiations has not received similar historical treatment. One aspect of Canada's role in forging the alliance that has been largely ignored is the military diplomacy of the Department of National Defence (DND) and, particularly, chief of the general staff, Lieutenant-General Charles Foulkes.

This article will examine Foulkes' military diplomacy from 1949-1951, as he sought to ensure representation in allied decision-making when Canadian resources were deployed by NATO. The alliance in this period had two distinct developmental stages, necessitating two separate approaches to alliance representation. The first stage, occurring before the North Atlantic Treaty (NAT) military structure was finalized, saw the

Abstract: Much has been written about the leading role of diplomats Lester Pearson, Hume Wrong, and Escott Reid in forging the North Atlantic Treaty in 1948-1949. Regrettably, much less attention has been devoted in the literature to the equally important contributions of Lieutenant-General Charles Foulkes, then Canada's chief of the general staff, to the alliance military structure. This essay charts Foulkes' military diplomacy through two distinct stages. The first stage saw the dissemination of the "Foulkes Plan", the alliance's first structural planning document. The second stage was defined by Foulkes' efforts to ensure Canadian representation by empowering the NATO Military Committee. Through pragmatic diplomacy, focused on Canadian interests, Foulkes made a considerable contribution to NATO's military organization and operations.

dissemination of the "Foulkes Plan," NATO's first structural planning document. By taking the initiative in organizational planning, Foulkes sought to institutionalize a privileged position for Canada within the new alliance. The second stage, occurring once the alliance structure was finalized, included the early operations of the NATO Military Committee and the related "Canadian proposal" for alliance reorganization. At this stage, Foulkes observed that, in practice, NATO military affairs

tilted heavily toward US-UK-French dominance. As a result, Foulkes reoriented his strategy toward empowering the NATO Military Committee as the primary means of ensuring Canadian representation. Foulkes' efforts, pragmatic rather than visionary, significantly shaped the alliance.

Foulkes served as Canadian chief of the general staff (CGS) from 1945-51 and then as chair of the chiefs of staff committee from 1951-60. According to J.L. Granatstein, Foulkes was the "only military politician with the ability and clout to deal on even terms with the public service mandarins."¹ Viewed as "dour, short, cold, but very shrewd," Foulkes ascended the ranks during the Second World War with particular support from General H.D.G. Crerar.² He was appointed chief of the general staff in 1945 primarily because of his bureaucratic ability and his suitable understanding of the role of the military in postwar society.³ Having served as commander of the I Canadian Corps during the war and then as CGS, by 1948 Foulkes had cultivated close relationships with his British and American counterparts.⁴

The NATO treaty was signed in Washington on 4 April 1949.



General Charles Foulkes, chief of the general staff, played an important behind-the-scenes role to ensure Canada's voice at NATO.

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The signatories included Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States. At the time of ratification, NATO countries were profoundly concerned about the strategic imbalance in Europe. It was estimated that NATO could muster about 14 active divisions compared to a projected 175 Soviet divisions. Although it was generally assumed the Soviet Union would not risk open war, it did aid communist forces indirectly and through armed intimidation. An American general was reported to have mused that all the Soviets needed was "some good pairs of boots" to conquer Western Europe.⁵ This caused great alarm and strengthened western resolve to contain further Soviet expansion. As a result, NATO's primary objective was to provide an effective and credible deterrent. The effectiveness

of this deterrent would be achieved by augmenting NATO's military capacity to respond to the Soviet threat. The credibility of the deterrent would be enhanced by creating an organizational structure capable of coordinating its multinational forces. It was believed that these measures would boost European confidence and invigorate their defence efforts. All of these ends could be met by establishing an organization capable of managing rearmament and military planning. This task was complicated by the significant diversity of interests represented among the membership of the new alliance.

The text of the NAT, complete by March 1949, was largely silent on questions of alliance structure. Article 9 spoke vaguely of an allied council and defence committee. On 2 April 1949, allied foreign ministers agreed to postpone formal discussion

of structure until the treaty had been signed and ratified.⁶ For the US, UK, Canada, and France, this pause in negotiations would allow them to reach agreement on an acceptable organization before an alliance-wide working group convened to consider the matter formally in preparation for the September 1949 meeting of the NATO foreign ministers.

Canadian considerations of the NATO military organization were conditioned by memories of the wartime US-UK Combined Chiefs of Staff, which conducted the war with minimal consultation. The wartime Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force was appointed in 1944 without any consultation with, or formal delegation of authority from, the Canadian government. Since 1946, however, Canada had participated in a secret trilateral "ABC" strategic planning forum with the United States and Britain which gave Canadians access to high level planning and intelligence. Therefore, Canadian officials in the Department of National Defence believed that it was in Canada's interest to prevent a return to the Combined Chiefs of Staff and to ensure an arrangement similar to the ABC forum. This was considered to be particularly important when decisions were taken about the nature and extent of Canadian contributions to NATO.

To meet these interests, General Foulkes developed a plan for the NAT defence organization. In March 1949, he circulated a "purely personal paper" proposing a structure for the alliance to Major-General Alfred Gruenther (US Director of the Combined Staff) in Washington and Major-General Sir Leslie Hollis (UK Chief Staff Officer to the Minister of Defence) in London. The primary basis of the "Foulkes Plan" was

a series of interlocking “Regional Planning Groups” (RPGs), which were designed to ensure a degree of regional autonomy and initiative in coordinating allied defences. Countries that did not contribute to the defence of a given region would not have representation. This ensured that the groups were small, efficient, and most importantly, relatively secure from Soviet espionage. As a means of aggregating this regional planning into a broader strategic concept, Foulkes proposed a Supreme Commander or Combined Chiefs committee. Although he preferred a Supreme Commander, Foulkes recognized that a Combined Chiefs body might be more politically acceptable. A final element of his plan was the “Strategic Reserve Group” (SRG), composed only of the countries likely to have uncommitted reserves of personnel and materials for continental Europe: the United States,

Britain, and Canada. The Strategic Reserve Group would collaborate with the Supreme Commander or NATO Combined Chiefs to deploy its forces with a view to broader strategic imperatives.⁷ All of these bodies would function under the Defence Committee, described in article 9 of the NAT.

Foulkes’ plan provided an efficient means of mobilizing the deterrent and protecting Canadian interests. By giving the Europeans responsibility for their own defence through the RPGs, Canada would also be under less pressure to send troops to Europe in peacetime. Foulkes recognized that this would be politically important because the Canadian public and its government were unlikely to support such a deployment. The SRG would prevent a return to the old Combined Chiefs of Staff, institutionalize Canada’s privileged planning role within the

new alliance, and ensure that Canada was able to determine the nature and extent of its contribution to North Atlantic defence.

On 24 March, General Hollis met with Lieutenant-Colonel R.L. Raymont, the Canadian Joint Liaison Officer in London, to discuss Foulkes’ memo. While welcoming the Canadian initiative, Hollis conveyed profound reservations about the regional basis of the plan. Hollis had envisioned a structure predicated on Western European defence and thought that a regional framework would dilute NATO’s European focus by implying an equal emphasis on Scandinavian and North American security. His concern that this could provide an avenue for a return to North American isolationism was reinforced by the fact that Foulkes did not envision Canadian membership in the Western European RPG. Under the proposed structure, argued Hollis,

Lester B. Pearson (left, with hand on chin), W.L. Mackenzie King (at head of the table) and Charles Foulkes (to the right of King) confer at the NATO conference.



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Left: Signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, Washington DC, 4 April 1949.

Below: External Affairs minister Lester Pearson signs the NATO Treaty for Canada.



Canada would offer little more than "good wishes" to European defence.⁸ In addition, Hollis contended that a Supreme Commander would be politically unacceptable and that the Strategic Reserve Group would imply further detachment from European defence. In the case of the Supreme Commander, Hollis suggested that a Combined Chiefs composed of the US, UK, and Canada should carry out strategic direction "on the lines of the present ABC set up."

The British presented an alternative vision to American planners. After exploring means of ensuring US-UK dominance of strategic planning,⁹ the UK Joint Services Mission composed a plan which sought to graft the NAT military organization onto the nascent Western Union Defence Organization. The British plan allowed for only two committees: a Western European committee composed of the US, Canada, and the signatories of the Brussels Pact;¹⁰ and an Atlantic Ocean subcommittee limited to the US, UK, Canada, and France. Representatives from the other NATO countries would be consulted only when necessary.¹¹ The proposal also advocated a Combined Chief "Steering Committee," which

would be limited to the US, UK, Canada, and France. The Steering Committee was to be located in London, which would allow the high-level Canadian and American representatives on the NATO committee to sit as observers on the Western Union Defence Organization. This overlap of representation would ensure that "the decisions of the Western Union Chiefs of Staff would be automatically ratified by the Atlantic Pact Chiefs of Staff."¹²

Undeterred, Foulkes went to Washington in April 1949 to discuss his proposal with US officials. Although he found that US military planners were still in the preliminary stages of their consideration of the matter, Foulkes was pleased to find that his paper had been reproduced and circulated to various Pentagon directors for comment. He discovered that it had made a very favourable impression. General Omar Bradley, the US Army chief of staff, argued that the proposed regional arrangements "were the only ones which would be workable in the Atlantic Pact." Regarding the British proposal, Bradley "did not favour any further

extension of US responsibility within the Western Union." The Americans also appeared much more amenable than the British to the idea of having a NATO Supreme Commander. In fact, General Gruenther went so far as to suggest that former Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, US General Dwight Eisenhower, might be "drafted" to head the alliance military organization. In the event that a Combined Chiefs organization was formed, US officials favoured a US-UK-Canada-France membership.¹³

Although his SRG concept seemed to have little traction, most elements of Foulkes' plan now appeared to stand a good chance of being adopted. On 19 April, Foulkes summarized the results of his Washington meetings: "From these conversations I am left with the opinion that the...principles which are contained in the Canadian paper will most likely be accepted as a basis for setting-up a military organization... If these principles are accepted it would appear to satisfy

the Canadian interests." Without his planned SRG, Foulkes turned his attention to finding a way of formalizing Canada's privileged ABC planning position within NATO – "it will still be necessary to form some kind of vehicle in which the present strategic planning of UK US and Canada can be continued without creating an atmosphere which will be injurious to the proper development of territorial defence in each region."¹⁴ British and American support for Canadian participation on an allied Combined Chiefs "Steering Committee" was a promising means of ensuring representation when planning occurred with implications for Canadian resources.

Foulkes' optimism was quickly tempered by developments in External Affairs. The reports flowing from Foulkes' pen, particularly those concerning Canadian participation on an allied military Steering Committee, caused Undersecretary of State for External Affairs Arnold Heeney to worry that Canada would be overwhelmed with military commitments:

It would clearly be inappropriate and unwise for us to take a leading part in putting forward proposals for the form that defence organization might take under the Atlantic Treaty. It could indeed prove very embarrassing if we were to insist on any given scheme for our own representation and then find that we seriously disagreed with the criteria proposed by other countries for apportioning the burden in men, money or supplies.¹⁵

External Affairs and National Defence had different viewpoints on the role Canada should play in NATO. Here Lester Pearson and Arnold Heeney sit in a NATO Council meeting. General Foulkes is visible in the second row (with his arms crossed).

Probably still hearing the cautious echoes of retired Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King in the halls of the East Block of the Parliament buildings, Heeney warned that a position on the Steering Committee might entail a contribution of personnel and materials consistent with that position. Heeney's concerns may also have been influenced by the knowledge that Ottawa would soon be considering its contributions to European mutual aid.

On 12 May 1949 the Cabinet Defence Committee met in Ottawa to discuss the matter. Foulkes argued that Canada should push for a role on the Standing Group, since "planning...would inevitably involve the use of Canadian troops and Canadian facilities and the Chiefs of Staff considered that Canada should be represented on the senior planning body." Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester Pearson, fresh from a briefing with Heeney, argued that Canada should seek representation only "when matters of direct concern to Canada were being

discussed." The cabinet concluded that "Canada should not actively seek representation on the senior military body," but would accept an invitation if offered.¹⁶ Canadian ambassador in Washington Hume Wrong immediately met with John D. Hickerson, the US Assistant Secretary of State for United Nations Affairs, to communicate this policy. The same day, Heeney sought to disarm Foulkes by insisting that talks on the military organization should be conducted exclusively by the Embassy in Washington, rather than by Foulkes and his staff.¹⁷ Canadian membership on the Steering Committee, however, continued to appear in British proposals as late as July 1949.¹⁸ Perhaps alarmed by this prospect, Wrong again raised the question that August with George Perkins, US Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, and restated the Canadian policy.¹⁹

On 23 June the US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) finally completed its own set of recommendations on the NATO military organization. The



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plan supported Foulkes' regional concept and reinforced the emerging consensus on the need for a Steering Group. The JCS, which wanted to keep the committee small, took the view that a maximum of three countries should be included as Steering Group members in their August Working Group proposals. These three would be the US, UK, and France. The JCS also proposed a "Military Advisory Council," composed of the chiefs of staff of all NATO countries.

In August 1949 the Joint Chiefs toured Western Europe to ascertain the views of allied military authorities. The meetings produced general agreement on the alliance organization, with a few exceptions. The most important disagreement arose over the composition of the Steering Committee, with Italy demanding membership, and France and Norway advocating a Canadian seat on the committee.²⁰ Canadian membership was also advocated "for political reasons" by the US State Department, but blocked by the JCS, which insisted that the committee should be no larger than three.²¹

With general agreement on the allied military structure, the NATO Working Group conferred in Washington on 22 August 1949. Canada was represented by its Washington Embassy counsellor George Ignatieff and, in the background, by Ambassador Hume Wrong. The primary Canadian objective at the meetings was to advance a consultative formula ensuring that non-Steering Committee countries would have representation on the committee when items of "direct concern" were discussed. This formula, originally suggested by Pearson, sought to prevent the use of Canadian troops without adequate consultation.²² For Foulkes, this provision would principally protect Canadian interests since Canada was likely to be the only non-Steering

Committee ally that would contribute troops outside of its region.

The Canadian negotiators were shocked to learn that the JCS was "somewhat perturbed" by the Canadian representation formula and reluctant to grant it.²³ Pearson instructed Ignatieff to demonstrate that this was a "minimum Canadian requirement," implying that Canada would reconsider its participation in the alliance if the formula was not approved. Pearson even contemplated a personal visit to Washington to "stand firm on this no matter what the Chiefs of Staff think."²⁴ Although the JCS eventually assented to the Canadian consultative formula, it would come to mean little, as the big three interpreted the provision very loosely.

The Foulkes Plan outlined what, in effect, became the military organization of NATO.²⁵ The basis for the alliance structure approved in October 1949 was the Regional Planning Groups, the ostensible centre of regional planning and allied defence. The Standing Group (the new, more acceptable, nomenclature for the Steering Committee), with Britain, France and the United States as members, would be in continuous session to convert the work of the RPGs into a broader strategic concept. The Standing Group, which embodied the Combined Chiefs committee concept proposed by Foulkes, came to represent an executive group for the alliance. As suggested by the JCS, a Military Committee was formed at the chiefs of staff level with representation for all allies. As a means of liaison between the Standing Group and the smaller powers, "Accredited Representatives" were appointed in Washington to coordinate the work of the Military Committee and Standing Group.

With the alliance forged and its structure finalized in October 1949, Foulkes turned his attention to the

protection of Canadian interests by guaranteeing a seat at the table when important decisions involving the use of troops and resources were made. He soon discovered, however, that this objective ran counter to NATO's inclination toward Standing Group supremacy. Although technically subordinate to the Military Committee, the Standing Group was always intended to be an "executive committee" in which key allies would "limit the real work of the Military Committee," so as to create an alliance structure "more in accordance with the realities of the situation."²⁶ Aside from presenting an obstacle to Foulkes' representational objectives, this arrangement caused considerable embarrassment when the Standing Group sought to hector its smaller allies into supporting proposals without sufficient time to secure instructions from their governments. Foulkes, always aware of Ottawa's political climate, soon found this arrangement intolerable.

The Standing Group's actions necessitated a fundamental reorientation of Canada's alliance interests toward strengthening the position of the Military Committee to ensure that the "overall direction of the alliance must be carried on by the alliance as a whole, an alliance in which we were all equal partners, though not of equal strength."²⁷ The Military Committee, however, had important structural weaknesses, as defence expert Douglas Bland argues. It only met annually; its chair rotated, detracting from any sustained leadership; it had no staff or secretariat; and, it had an extremely broad mandate, which obscured its role.²⁸ Furthermore, the urgency of European defence allowed the Standing Group to cite its own relative efficiency and security as a justification for withholding information and avoiding genuine consultation with the Military Committee.

As a means of overcoming the Military Committee's structural weaknesses, Foulkes and defence minister Brooke Claxton came to work closely with NATO's non-Standing Group members to ensure genuine consultation. Aside from shared interests, Foulkes found that support for curbing the Standing Group's authority was ripened by a sense that a problem existed with allied operations. In particular, the tactics employed by the Standing Group to secure adoption of the Medium Term Defence Plan in March 1950 left a very sour taste in the mouths of the allies.²⁹ The plan, calling for 90 NATO divisions in Europe by 1954, was widely dismissed as unrealistic and contributed to a feeling of hopelessness in the alliance. As Claxton remembers, this sense of grievance and discontent provided an opportunity for Canadian leadership:

Somewhat naturally, we came to be regarded as a leader among the smaller powers. At almost every meeting of the Defence Ministers several of the lesser powers would discuss privately with members of the Canadian team some high-handed action of the Standing Group...they would urge us to be their spokesman in taking some stand or asserting some point of view vis-à-vis the Standing Group powers...³⁰

The emerging consensus among the non-Standing Group members about the need for better representation grew into a virtual bloc within alliance circles and enabled Foulkes' push for greater military consultation.

A primary means of achieving this objective was to strengthen the role of the Accredited Representatives to

facilitate constructive liaison between the Military Committee and the Standing Group. At the first session of the Military Committee in October 1949, Foulkes called on the Standing Group to furnish the Accredited Representatives with an agenda prior to meetings so that these countries could be adequately prepared for what was to be discussed. This was agreed.³¹ At the second Military Committee session in December 1949, Foulkes requested that the Accredited Representatives be consulted before the dissemination of strategic guidance papers to the RPGs. This suggestion ran into considerable resistance from the Standing Group countries, which emphasized the urgency of these measures. Foulkes stood firm, insisting that he had been told that the Accredited Representatives would actively consult with the Standing Group. They would not be insignificant "paper boys." The committee acceded to Foulkes' suggestion.³² Two days later at the NATO Defence Committee meeting, the defence ministers from Norway and Denmark made their acceptance of the "Review of Progress" paper conditional on the Standing Group compliance with the consultative procedure outlined by Foulkes.³³

In the lead up to the October 1950 NATO Defence and Military Committee meetings, Claxton and Foulkes advanced a plan that would convert the Accredited Representatives into the Military Committee in permanent session, not dissimilar from the newly formed North Atlantic Council "Deputies."³⁴ At the fourth Military Committee meeting of that session, Foulkes raised Claxton's proposals for deepening the responsibilities of the Accredited Representatives. He argued that the representatives should take part in the discussion and formulation of military policy, beyond their current liaison role. He requested that the representatives be provided with papers and agendas sufficiently in advance to secure feedback and represent their home governments.

Foulkes' efforts led to a proposal that the Military Committee convert the Accredited Representatives into a Military Representatives Committee to fulfill this consultative mandate.³⁵ US General Omar Bradley, reminding the committee of the efficiency of the Standing Group, stated his interpretation of the character of consultation. He suggested "after any paper has been prepared, it will be presented to the Committee

NATO Photos



**First Meeting of Council Deputies,
London, 25 July 1950.**

of Deputies before it is distributed to the nations of NATO." Foulkes countered "when a paper was being prepared the deputies would be called in and told that the Standing Group was preparing a paper on the following subject. That would give an opportunity for national views to be discussed before the paper is produced." Foulkes further requested that non-Standing Group members be included in the working parties and secretariats, which served the Standing Group. This proposal was adopted.³⁶ The Military Representatives Committee was

formally established at the joint session of the North Atlantic Council and Defence Committee in December 1950. The Military Representatives Committee contributed to providing a greater multilateral base within the alliance by facilitating continuous contact among the members of the Military Committee and with the Standing Group.

Foulkes' campaign to strengthen the functions of the Military Committee continued at the December 1950 session when discussion turned to the responsibilities associated with the leadership of the committee.

The chair of the Military Committee was determined on an annual basis by the representatives of each NATO country, rotating in English alphabetical order. This arrangement was ineffective because non-Standing Group chairs did not have access to the papers necessary to advance the agenda. As a result, meetings with a non-Standing Group chair were generally unproductive.³⁷ As a means of overcoming these difficulties, Belgian General Etienne Baele requested the assignment of his personal staff to consult with the Standing Group prior to assuming the Military Committee chair. General Baele's request was interrupted by British Air Marshal Sir John Slessor, who sought to delay consideration of this proposal.

Foulkes reinforced Baele's position by suggesting that the staff of a non-Standing Group chair should sit as an observer in Standing Group meetings and establish a link with the Standing Group chair in the months preceding their chairpersonship. Upon agreement from the Committee, General Léchères of France suggested that the committee avoid committing this arrangement to paper. The Canadian responded by reminding the committee:

We have had promises by the Standing Group which have not been kept before. I have had a promise from the Chairman of the Standing Group that they would provide papers and agendas. There has been no action...It is all right to say that we consult further, but if we take last year's practice you will recall that our representatives were only called in for discussions four times in

Lieutenant-General Foulkes meets with General Dwight D. Eisenhower in Ottawa on 26 January 1946. Eisenhower was to become NATO's first Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) in 1950.



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the whole year. You will also recall that we got papers the day we came into the meeting...I am sure that we must at least get a written record for the Standing Group about the arrangements when a non member becomes Chairman. I am vitally concerned in this.³⁸

The Canadian and Belgian position was supported by most of the smaller countries and forced Slessor to note that "special arrangements" ought to be made to allow a non-Standing Group chair to fulfill its responsibilities more effectively.

The creation of the Military Representatives Committee, which became the Military Committee in Permanent Session several years later, and the "special arrangements" for non-Standing Group chair consultation, contributed to an erosion of the early supremacy of the Standing Group powers. Claxton recalls in his memoirs:

At one particular time one of the members of the permanent council stated that non-Standing Group nations had delegated the control of their military affairs to the three major powers. It was this kind of assumption that brought about the establishment of the Military Representatives Committee, but the establishment of this committee was only to come in consequence of repeated pressure by us; for in this as in so much else in NATO, Canada took the initiative.³⁹

The Military Representatives Committee allowed NATO's smaller allies to address matters that, until then, would have had to wait for a session of the Military Committee. The Canadian contribution to this structural development strengthened the hand of the Military Committee through greater consultative measures and the establishment of the Military Representatives Committee.

As a further means of ensuring that decisions were taken "by the alliance as a whole" Foulkes collaborated closely with the Department of External Affairs to draft a proposal for the reorganization of NATO. The "Canadian proposal," first broached at the North Atlantic Council in September 1950, recommended the creation of one "government level" council to replace the three autonomous foreign, defence, and finance ministerial committees. Although the proposal was primarily pursued through the NATO Council of Deputies (composed of representatives from allied foreign ministries), its consideration necessitated collaboration with the respective national military authorities. The proposed reorganization came to be tied conceptually to the issue of greater alliance control of the Standing Group. Recognizing the opportunity, Foulkes touted the proposal as a means of improving consultation by empowering greater political oversight of NATO military operations by a body on which all allies were represented.

An initial paper, composed by Arnold Heeney, was forwarded to NATO member governments on 17 November 1950. The draft's political aspects generated broad support on the Council of Deputies, particularly its proposed amalgamation of all NATO activities "under one Supreme Council which would represent Governments" and its enhancement of the Council Deputies as "the active continuing authority of the NATO."⁴⁰ The draft's military paragraphs, however, inadvertently caused "alarm and despondency" in military circles because they did not take into account the creation of the Military Representatives Committee and they suggested that the NATO Military Committee be reconstituted as an advisory body of the Standing Group.⁴¹ Moreover, the proposed subordination of the Standing Group

to the Council Deputies generated consternation within the US, UK, and French militaries. After a heated debate on the proposal's military dimensions ensued on 12 December, the proposal was held back by Canadian officials at US request until measures for the formation of SHAPE and the integration of German forces were further advanced. In the intervening period, Foulkes redrafted the proposal's military section to bring it "into line" with emerging alliance military imperatives.

The amended Canadian plan incorporating Foulkes' revisions was circulated to allied governments in January 1951. On the contentious relationship between the Deputies and the Standing Group, Foulkes proposed compromise language, suggesting that the Standing Group "would be guided on political matters by the [North Atlantic] Council, and when Council is not in session by the Council Deputies." In addition, the Council Deputies would obtain "military guidance" from NATO military authorities. Instead of making the Military Committee an advisory body of the Standing Group, Foulkes proposed the conversion of the Military Committee into a "Defence Committee" in permanent session.⁴² In all but name, the newly constituted committee would create the Military Committee in permanent session that Foulkes had advocated in October 1950. If adopted, the plan would enhance greatly the position of NATO's smaller powers vis-à-vis the Standing Group, even beyond that envisioned by the creation of the Military Representatives Committee.

Foulkes also worked to build support for the proposal among his counterparts. To this end, he continued to place particular emphasis on the non-Standing Group countries, since "the smaller nations still look to Canada to take the lead."⁴³ At the Council of Deputies meetings



North Atlantic Council meeting at the level of foreign ministers, Ottawa, Canada, 20 September 1951.

The member countries sign an agreement on the status of NATO, national representatives and international staff (Civilian Status Agreement).

NATO Photos

in January 1951, the Canadian proposal generated support from the Dutch and Norwegian deputies, who endorsed the principle of the Council of Deputy's primacy over the Standing Group.⁴⁴ This position encountered stiff resistance from the British representative.⁴⁵ The US representative, Charles Spofford, on the other hand, "said very little" on the Council, except to his "express personal view" of support for positions which had reached virtual consensus.⁴⁶ Spofford's hands (and the Council's) were tied until the US State and Defense Departments reached final agreement on the US position.

In February 1951, Foulkes visited Washington to discuss the matter with General Bradley. Bradley opposed the notion of extending the Military Committee to serve in permanent session, appealing instead to the new Military Representatives Committee "to see whether this arrangement was to be satisfactory."⁴⁷ On the relationship between the Standing Group and the Council Deputies, the JCS proposed that the deputies "shall provide the Standing Group with political guidance upon which strategic decisions should be based. The Standing Group shall maintain

close liaison with the Council Deputies and provide that body with advice on military matters."⁴⁸ This position, which incorporated the essential elements of the Canadian proposal, represented a significant compromise by the JCS and was obtained only after considerable discussion with the State Department. The vocal appeals of NATO's "smaller nations" featured prevalently in necessitating this compromise. Recognizing the value of the proposed text, the Canadian representative conveyed Canada's willingness to accept the proposed text at the 9 April 1951 deputies meeting. NATO's other members soon followed.

The "Canadian proposal" was approved by the North Atlantic Council on 3 May 1951. The concessions obtained contributed to greater oversight of the Standing Group by the Council Deputies, where Canada had representation. Just as importantly, the increasingly assertive and concerted views of NATO's non-Standing Group powers made the practice of overt military control by the big three allies untenable. Although the proposed extension of the Military Committee into permanent session was dropped in the face of JCS opposition, it

brought the item onto the alliance's decision agenda and contributed to its adoption in 1958. On the political side, the proposal merged the work of the three committees into a reconstituted North Atlantic Council, which would act as "the sole ministerial body in the Organization," charged with "the responsibility of considering all matters concerning the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty." The role of the Council of Deputies was also enhanced to become "the permanent working organization of the North Atlantic Council."⁴⁹ This is essentially the position of the NATO Permanent Representatives today. Accompanying the growth in the role of the Council Deputies, an international secretariat was established to facilitate the work of the council. These institutional changes were an important antecedent to the measures adopted at the 1952 Lisbon Conference, which established a North Atlantic Council in permanent session and NATO's first Secretary General.

In period from 1949-1951, General Foulkes sought to protect and project Canadian interests by establishing a system within NATO that guaranteed Canada representation in alliance affairs. Foulkes' military diplomacy took two distinct forms. In the period before the alliance structure was finalized, he took the initiative in allied organization planning to propose a structure which included a privileged planning position for the Canadian military. Once the organization was formalized and began to operate, Foulkes undertook a campaign to strengthen the Military

Committee through increased consultation and political oversight by “the alliance as a whole.” These efforts, motivated primarily by a desire to protect Canadian interests, left a distinct mark on NATO.

Notes

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13. Condit. p.383.
14. DHH, Foulkes Papers, File 3044. Discussions on military organization of the Atlantic Pact. 19 April 1949.
15. *Canadian Documents on External Relations [DCER]*. Volume 15: 1949 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1995) Heeney to SSEA, 1 April 1949.
16. *DCER* 1949, Cabinet Conclusions, 12 May 1949, p.623.
17. DHH, Foulkes Papers, File 2529. Heeney to Foulkes, 12 May 1949.
18. DHH, Foulkes Papers, File 3044, Graham to Foulkes, 25 July 1949.
19. *FRUS* 1949, Perkins Memo, 3 August 1949, p.315.
20. See Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense. Proposed Military organization under the North Atlantic Treaty. File 3-12-48, 23 June 1949, JCS1868/87 Sec. 23, cited in Condit, pp.387-389.
21. See Secretary of State to Secretary of Defense. 22 July 1949, JCS 1868/93; File 3-12-48, sec. 25, cited in Condit, pp. 388. Also see: *FRUS* 1949. Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Perkins). 3 August 1949, p.315.
22. *DCER* 1949, Extract from the Minutes of Meeting of Chiefs of Staff Committee, 8 June 1949, p.631.
23. *DCER* 1949, Wrong to SSEA, 1 September 1949, p.657.
24. *DCER* 1949, Heeney to Wrong, 2 September 1949, p.658 & *DCER* 1949, Pearson Memorandum, 3 September 1949, p.659.
25. Library and Archives Canada [LAC], Brooke Claxton. *Draft Memoirs, Chapter: NATO*. p.7A
26. See *FRUS* 1949, Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State, 1 April 1949, p.265 & *FRUS* 1949, Memorandum of Conversation, by the Counselor of the Department of State (Bohlen), 8 April 1949, p.291.
27. LAC, Claxton Draft Memoirs, NATO Chapter, pp.18-19.
28. Douglas Bland, *The Military Committee of the North Atlantic Alliance: A Study of Structure and Strategy*. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991) pp. 138.
29. *DCER*, Vol.16: 1950 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1996.) Extracts from Minutes of Meeting of Cabinet Defence Committee, 25 April 1950, p. 813.
30. LAC, Claxton Draft Memoirs, NATO Chapter, pp.19. This sentiment is shared in a conversation with Norwegian Foreign Minister Halvard Lange in July 1951. (LAC, St. Laurent Papers, MG 26N, Volume 45).
31. NATO Archives, First Meeting, North Atlantic Military Committee, 6 October 1949, pp. 7-11. LAC RG 24, Volume 21164, File CSC 1425:1:pt. 1.
32. NATO Archives, Second Meeting of the NATO Military Committee, pp.15-17.
33. *DCER* 1949. Report by the Department of National Defence. 1 December 1949, p.704.
34. *DCER* 1950, Extract from the Minutes of the Cabinet Defence Committee, 12 October 1950, p.1015.
35. NATO Archives, Fourth Meeting of the Military Committee, 24 October 1950, pp.12 & 41.
36. NATO Archives, Fourth Meeting of the Military Committee, 24 October 1950, pp.46-51. A further amendment was included two days later which clarified the consultative process even further. (p.151)
37. Bland, p.153.
38. NATO Archives, Fourth Meeting of the Military Committee, 12 December 1950, p.36.
39. LAC, Claxton Draft Memoirs, NATO Chapter, pp.9-10.
40. *FRUS* 1950, Canadian Reorganization Proposal, 17 November 1951, p.461 & *FRUS* 1950, Memorandum from the Canadian North Atlantic Council Deputy (Pearson) to the North Atlantic Council Deputies, 17 November 1950, p.461.
41. *DCER* 1950, Chief of the general staff to Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee, 18 December 1950, p.493.
42. The existing “Defence Committee” would be merged with the other ministerial committees into the North Atlantic Council.
43. *DCER* 1950, Chief of the general staff to Secretary Chiefs of Staff Committee, 18 December 1950, pp. 493. This strategy, no doubt, included consultation with his Norwegian and Dutch counterparts Lieutenant-General Bjarne Øen and General H.G. Kruls, who Foulkes had collaborated closely with on the Military Committee.
44. The Dutch representative went so far as to suggest that the Council should provide “direction” to military authorities, over and above the “guidance” envisioned in the Canadian proposal.
45. *FRUS* 1951, Volume III, Part I & II. The United States Deputy Representative on the North Atlantic Council (Spofford) to the Secretary of State, 24 January 1951. p.36.
46. *FRUS* 1951, The US Deputy Representative on the North Atlantic Council (Spofford) to the Secretary of State, 12 January 1951, p.26.
47. DHH, Foulkes Papers, File 3054, Record of Discussions - Washington, 19 February 1951.
48. *FRUS* 1951, The Deputy Secretary of Defense (Lovett) to the Secretary of State, 7 March 1951, p.89.
49. *FRUS* 1951, Spofford to Acheson, May 1951, pp.156-159.

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