

The interrelation between ecology and disarmament in the arctic is a very urgent one. The region is heavily militarized, and military activity in the arctic is far from decreasing. Of the eight countries in the arctic region, five are members of NATO. The five NATO countries show no particular desire to meet the USSR's initiative (outlined by M.S. Gorbachev last autumn in Murmansk) half way. Nor do they wish to reduce their military naval activities in the region. And yet the "contribution" made by military vessels to the tens of millions of tonnes of refuse that are dumped into the waters surrounding northern Europe each years, is enormous.

It is unlikely that anyone today would risk denying that the arms race and military activity are detrimental to nature. It isn't just a question of the diversion of enormous resources, but also one of contamination and the unpredictable consequences that the accumulation of chemical and nuclear weapons may bring about. Why is it that the "ecologically aware" northern member-nations of NATO are so suspicious of the concept of a nuclear-free northern Europe?

One of the reasons is that military detente might result in a shift in the "balance of power" in favour of the Soviet Union, which, owing to its size and potential, would become the dominant force in Europe. If those who believe in this scenario were to examine the concept of the "common European home" proposed by the USSR more closely, they would see the anachronism of their arguments. Mutually convenient cooperation with equal rights--that is our goal, not domination.

We can agree with the fact that there must be balance--but of interests, not forces, of ecology, not weapons.