

Mutual consultation important for NATO alliance

By JOHN McGUIRE

Mr. Claus G.M. Koren, spoke to a public meeting of the Fredericton branch of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs this past Tuesday. Between fifteen and twenty people attended, as Koren discussed the topic "NATO and Canada: A European Perspective". A native of Oslo, Norway, he has been the Director of Information at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium for two years. He served in a similar capacity at the Allied Forces Northern Europe Headquarters near Oslo between 1955 and 1972. Fredericton was the fifth stop on his tour of Canada, as previous talks were given in Victoria, Vancouver, Winnipeg and Montreal.

In his presentation, Koren dwelt heavily on the theme of "mutual consultation" between the fifteen members of NATO and the effect these discussions have upon the vital area of East-West relations. He began by praising the "Ottawa Declaration" of NATO ministers, signed on the 19th of June of this year. This followed a period of "disarray" in the Atlantic Alliance brought on by questioning of the western alliance's "outlived usefulness" and possible future role. However, the speaker held that this uncertainty had become inevitable because of past successes. He named three areas of advance: first, the successful building of the NATO alliance, which has allowed a shift from confrontation to negotiation and a feeling that "detente" is inevitable, with a corresponding drop in emphasis on sharing the burdens of defence within the alliance; second, a redirection of national priorities from military to economic and other concerns; and third, a combination of a realignment of political power due to the solidarity of the Common Market with a new economic power structure based on international corporations. Friction resulted from the conflict between these and NATO considerations, Koren noted. Henry Kissinger's call for a change in NATO relationships as well as the difficulties brought on by last year's Yom Kippur War were evidence of a need for solidarity within the NATO group.

The speaker cited the Ottawa Declaration, one of a series of peaceful intra-alliance negotiations, as strengthening the base of security within the alliance, as well as a means of staking out "the road to success" in the building of "true detente" with the Communist bloc. In passing, he compared NATO's decision-making system, one of mutual consultation based on common democratic backgrounds and designed to keep nations informed on matters of common interest, with the Communist Warsaw Pact, which, as shown in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Hungary in 1956, uses force to obtain unity.

The Ottawa Declaration, Koren stated, also showed that Canada must have a NATO policy which would allow it to take an active part in a strong alliance, which in turn would require active participation on our part to become established. This active sharing in the alliance would permit the maintenance and broadening of

consultations, with the idea of avoiding unilateral actions by countries such as the United States. Mentioned were the over 300 committees, composed of 23,000 experts from different nations (400 from Canada) who meet in Brussels with the aim of working through the common interest of NATO to make practical and consulting processes work better.

Turning to the question of East-West relations, Koren declared that NATO's "most important consideration" was still the analysis of the Warsaw Pact intentions and the devising of strategies to counteract such plans. The western alliance has decided on the basis of local reports that the Soviets still want to expand their zones of influence throughout the world, and that possible use of force on their part cannot be ruled out. So the relationship between NATO and the Warsaw Pact is still that of adversaries.

However, because of the solidarity of the western alliance, Koren said, progress has been made in negotiations. He spoke of the SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) where the U.S., in consultation with NATO, has had some success in getting the Soviets to negotiate limits on nuclear weapons. The question of mutual and balanced force reductions in Central Europe has also seen a start in negotiations, despite the complicating factor of there being more Warsaw Pact troops in the area than NATO troops before the start of talks.

The Soviet-initiated Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Ostpolitik (made famous by Willy Brandt) were given as further examples of the type of conferences and principles that NATO backs. The first is handicapped by conflicting aims, i.e. the Soviets see the conference as a means of legalizing the borders of Eastern European nations, while NATO and the neutrals present regard it as a possible start of more contacts between people of all European countries. But negotiations have begun. Koren looked to the Ostpolitik and the normalization of relations between West Germany and Eastern European countries, plus the admission of both Germanies to the United Nations, as examples of what could be done by negotiation, especially if NATO-backed.

The Soviet side was portrayed as looking for detente with the West, because they don't think they can win a war militarily, they fear China and a possible "two-front" war, they fear isolation, they need help from the West to deal with their economic and technical problems, and they see NATO as willing to resist attempts to increase their international influence.

Koren also discussed Canada's military role in NATO, which consists of ground forces, mainly in Germany, backed up by a joint NATO navy and air force. The forces of different countries are located according to decisions made by the central command - for instance, Germany's own forces work with Danish troops in southern Norway, which then frees Norwegian forces to guard the northern part of their own country. The guest speaker then

quoted figures to the effect that over 70 percent of each of the ground, sea and air divisions of NATO is made up of Europeans. Also, while about one percent of the populations of European members are in the armed forces, only one-third of one percent of Canada's are in uniform. Nevertheless, Canadian troops are regarded as "highly professional".

The speaker also mentioned the \$6 billion worth of jointly-held NATO facilities throughout the alliance, and the "Annual Review", where defence needs are assessed and the burdens of defence shared as much as possible among members. He emphasized that these are the result of joint consultations and

negotiations, which will continue.

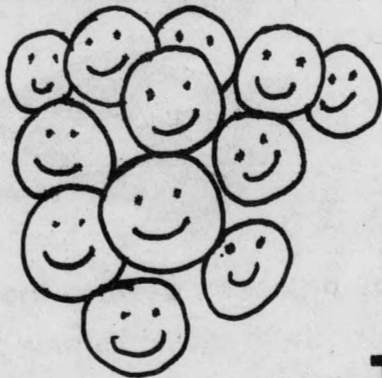
In closing, the 52-year old Koren pointed out that NATO will only survive if it can clearly demonstrate its purposes of protecting and strengthening free institutions, trying to change society without a loss of freedom to the individual, and trying to pass its values on to posterity. To do that, he said, there are three goals the alliance must attain. One is to provide security for the North Atlantic region, through military and political action. Another is to act as a forum for consultation between allies, to deepen and enforce security and to form a common front in negotiations with adversaries. Finally, NATO

should be a vehicle for the exchange of ideas of mutual benefit. In this vein, NATO's Director of Information finished with the idea that while all members get equal benefits from the alliance, some need more protection than others and some can contribute more than others. NATO, he said, would welcome more Canadian contributions.

This was the first meeting this year of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs' Fredericton branch. Mr. Koren waived the usual rule of confidentiality in his talk, allowing himself to be quoted. He mentioned that he found Canadian points of view on the alliance to be "interesting".



Claus G. M. Koren, Director of Information at NATO headquarters in Brussels, spoke at a public meeting on campus. His topic was "NATO and Canada. A European Perspective."



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