

the country at the end of the war. Eurocan, the giant forestry industry complex on Canada's west coast, was established by Finnish companies.

Finland's closest friends in the international community are fellow members of the Nordic Council, a consultative assembly of parliamentarians linking Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. The recognition of Swedish as one of Finland's two official languages facilitates communications between the two neighbours. Ministers of the Nordic countries meet regularly to discuss matters of common interest including defence and foreign policy developments. Finnish efforts to promote a nuclear-free zone in the Nordic area are viewed unenthusiastically by other members of the Council which consider the proposal inconsistent with the nuclear weaponry the Soviet Union maintains near its western borders and in submarines in the Baltic Sea. Proponents of the Plan maintain the Soviet Union could be persuaded to respect an international ban on the use of nuclear weapons in the Nordic area but skepticism outside Finland is widespread. In line with its neutrality-inspired policy of avoiding involvement in issues dividing the superpowers, the Finnish government withheld comment on the Soviet role in Afghanistan — a restraint which was accepted but which was painful to most Finns.

#### Nordic balance

The vulnerability of Finland's geopolitical position vis-à-vis the U.S.S.R. is appreciated by the other Nordic countries which recognize a condition of interdependence between the Nordic states. This is described by the term "Nordic balance". Halvard Lange, former Foreign Minister of Norway, referred to Finland and the "Nordic balance" in an article published in 1954. Norway, he wrote, refused to allow foreign bases on its territory because "the stationing of Allied units on the Scandinavian peninsula might provoke increasing Soviet pressure on Finland and possibly Russian occupation of Finnish bases near the Norwegian and Swedish borders, a development which would not only seriously impair the strategic position of both Norway and Sweden but which could cause also a serious deterioration of the international situation generally". Thus Finland's ability to maintain peaceful relationships with the Soviet Union makes an important contribution to stability in the Nordic area where any disruption of the existing power balance could have widespread international consequences.

Recognition of Finnish neutrality by both superpowers made possible the convening of the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty talks in Helsinki in 1969. Finnish contributions to detente were recognized by the choice of Helsinki as the site of the meeting of foreign ministers which planned the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe attended by the heads of government of the United States, Canada and all the European countries (except Albania) in the summer of

1975. A steady deterioration in the climate of detente since then has been disappointing to Finland.

Finland's friendship with the United States has not suffered from its success in improving relations and increasing economic cooperation with the Soviet Union. President Urho Kekkonen of Finland, Europe's senior statesman (he has been President since 1956) was one of the very few foreign dignitaries invited to make an official visit to the U.S. during its Bicentennial in 1976.

Similar outlooks and interests in international affairs provide a solid base for cooperation between Canada and Finland, bilaterally and in international fora. Trade and industrial cooperation have been increasing bilaterally, despite competitive positions of the forestry industries in the two countries. Canadians of Finnish descent make a significant contribution to Canada's cultural mosaic. Close associations between the armed forces of Canada and Finland in several United Nations peacekeeping operations have generated mutual respect. Finnish industrial technology has been introduced to Canada by Finnish firms which have established factories and branches extending from coast to coast. Canadian and Finnish universities are exchanging personnel engaged in northern studies.

J.K. Passikivi, President of Finland from 1946-56, and his successor, Dr. Kekkonen, have been responsible primarily for establishing constructive relationships with the Soviet Union despite differing political and social systems. Whether the rapport with Moscow will survive the passing of President Kekkonen and the aging leadership in the Soviet Union is a question worrying Finns. Although the Finnish President — at 80 the longest surviving post-World War II statesman — has not declared himself definitely a non-starter in the Presidential elections scheduled for 1984, Prime Minister Mauno Koivisto, a former governor of the Central Bank whose economic policies both at the Bank and as Prime Minister are credited with raising Finland from the economic doldrums induced by the international energy crisis, already is the popular favorite to succeed him. (The Finnish constitution endows the Presidency with wide powers including the right to appoint and dismiss Prime Ministers.)

In the light of sacrifices made and losses suffered in human life, territory and resources defending their independence against heavy odds, Finns consider they are under no obligation to apologize to the outside world for their success in living peacefully with their former enemy. On the contrary, they view the improvement in Finland's relations with the Soviet Union as beneficial to the two countries directly concerned and to their neighbours. *Sisu* is a Finnish word signifying determination to persevere towards goals, no matter how difficult and discouraging the odds against success may be. The history of the Finnish people shows *sisu* is aptly descriptive of their national character. "Finlandization" is not.