

NATO Parliamentarians

SEVENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

ABOUT 200 members of parliament from 14 of the 15 NATO countries attended the seventh annual conference of NATO Parliamentarians at NATO headquarters from November 13 to 17. Elections in Greece prevented the formation of a Greek delegation in time to attend.

This Conference was the seventh in a series of annual meetings of the organization, which was created spontaneously by legislators of NATO member countries as a forum where they could discuss the progress of NATO in all fields. In the terms of their own statute, the Parliamentarians' Conference has as its aim "to provide an informal link between the responsible NATO authorities and the national parliaments and . . . to help to promote a common feeling of Atlantic solidarity in the various legislative assemblies". Representatives are appointed by national parliaments, not governments, and speak and act on their own responsibilities as private members. The Canadian delegation of 15 Members of Parliament and Senators was led by Mr. Louis Fortin, M.P. for Montmagny-L'Islet, and Mr. Robert S. MacLellan, M.P. for Inverness-Richmond.

The Conference followed a pattern it had developed over a number of years. On the first day, it heard addresses from a number of eminent guest speakers: M. Maurice Couve de Murville, French Foreign Minister; Mr. D. U. Stikker, Secretary-General of NATO; Mr. Elvis J. Stahr, Jr., Secretary of the Army of the United States; and General Lauris Norstad, Supreme Allied Commander for Europe. It then divided for two days into committees to deal with political, military, scientific, informational and cultural matters, and returned for two days of plenary debates on the resolutions put forward by those committees.

Berlin

Berlin was naturally uppermost in the minds of the participants. The President of the Conference, Mr. Nils Langhelle, in his opening address recalled that the Sixth Conference of NATO Parliamentarians in 1960 had resolved unanimously that:

No solution can be admitted which would jeopardize the security, the freedom and the right of self-determination of democratic West Berlin and all its links and its communications with the Federal Republic of Germany.

All who spoke were agreed that the Communist threat to Berlin was not only directed at the existence of free West Berlin but that it had also two other important and concurrent aims: to consolidate the Communist East German regime and thereby to gain acceptance by the West of the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe; and to cause maximum disunity within NATO, if possible, by separating Western Germany from its allies. The view of the Conference was well expressed