

PRESIDENT' S REPORT - 2005

2005 was a year of significant change for the ACC. Early in the year, it was necessary to reduce staffing costs as there was a significant reduction in the number of Internship positions awarded to the ACC by Foreign Affairs Canada. The Executive-Director's contract was not renewed and the other two office staff members resigned.

This left the office without its core staff, necessitating the President to reduce her normal consulting contracts and undertake the Council's day-to-day activities. Mr. Adrian Hart was hired on a part-time basis as Executive Assistant to the President. Mr. Jurgen Torlee came on board to co-ordinate the Internship Program.

A further financial setback was encountered later in the year, when NATO awarded the annual briefing tour to another group.

Nevertheless, with great dedication and a lot of hard work from the staff mentioned above, and from core members of the Executive Committee, the ACC was able to present a full program of conferences, roundtables, dinner, corporate reception, one issue of TAQ, and web site publications, toward the implementation of ACC's global mandate. Vice-President, John McKenna, will provide details on some of these events.

Other opportunities opened up as we improved our cooperation with like-minded organizations such as the CIIA, CISS, and RCMI in order to extend our outreach across Canada. ACC participated in several joint roundtables with CIIA and the Defense Studies Committee of the RCMI.

In October, a delegation of eight ACC members, including two youth members, traveled to Tallinn, Estonia, to attend the 51st Annual General Assembly of the Atlantic Treaty Association. Because of the minority government situation, Foreign Affairs Canada recommended that the ACC change its bid to host the ATA Assembly from 2006, our 40th anniversary year, to 2007. The Assembly approved the change, and awarded the 2006 assembly to Greece. Your President was elected to the ATA Bureau as a Vice-President for a three-year term. The Canadian delegation met for lunch with Canada's Ambassador to the three Baltic countries, Mme Claire Poulin. She arranged for us to visit the HMCS Halifax, which happened to be in the Port of Tallinn with several other ships as part of a NATO exercise. The visit was one of the highlights of an excellent Assembly.

Following the Assembly, I traveled to Brussels to meet with NATO officials, and members of Canada's delegation to NATO, to acquaint them with the changes at the ACC, discuss ACC issues and workplans, and seek their input. Foreign Affairs Canada subsidized this trip. I and other members of the Executive Committee, have made great efforts to increase the ACC's profile and rebuild its reputation. However, it is time consuming and travel is expensive even within Canada.

The Transatlantic Quarterly (TAQ) is also an important component of our outreach strategy. The departing staff had left no structure in place, and no plans for the next issue. Therefore much work needed to be done to place the magazine on a sound business footing, and prepare layout templates, which will save much time in the future. The ACC entered into an agreement with Linda Lynch to be Editor-in-chief, market TAQ and get advertising revenue. She has done a tremendous job at laying the ground work in 2005, and it is expected that TAQ will be re-launched with a much expanded distribution list on a regular publishing schedule in 2006.

In view of these many changes, the Executive Committee spent some time reviewing the activities of the ACC for the coming years and developed a draft Operational Plan for the next three years, which we would like to share with you this evening and receive your input. Your Executive is firmly convinced that the activities proposed in the Operational Plan are activities that must be undertaken and can be undertaken in order to meet the ACC's mandate. It is not enough for the Council simply to exist and talk to itself. We are an organization with a mandate to inform Canadians. Therefore, we must do things. We must be proactive and bring information to the Canadian public. If we cannot do that, then we must question our existence.

At this time I would like to thank especially our Chairman, the Hon. Roy MacLaren, and our Vice-Chairman, Dr. Eric Jackman, for their strong support, also our Past Chairman, the Hon. Donald Macdonald. I cannot begin to express my gratitude to the members of the Executive Committee for the way in which they have supported me in this past year, and for all their hard work, as you will be able to tell from their reports.

We now ask the Directors to step up to the plate to help us raise funds to enable us to recruit qualified replacement staff, and continue to deliver our core and expanded programs. A campaign has been launched to increase corporate involvement and donations, and any activities or assistance you can offer in that regard, or in promoting the ACC with government and others will be warmly welcomed. Vice-President, Barry Davenport's report provides details. We would be glad to have your recommendations regarding corporations and foundations for us to approach for membership, donations, and advertising. A personal introduction from you to these entities would assist us tremendously. You may contact me at the ACC office by telephone or e-mail at info@atlantic-council.ca with any suggestions you may have or you may contact Barry Davenport.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Lindhout
President