

## 5. SCULPTING THE STONE: FROM PARIS TO HELSINKI

This new architecture...embraces all the countries of Europe and North America and all the issues that affect and contribute to their security....

Human rights, economic liberty, migration, social justice and equal security are all facets of a single stone.

- *External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall to the First Meeting of the CSCE Council, Berlin, June 19, 1991*

The Charter of Paris laid the institutional basis for CSCE conflict prevention and resolution that Canada had been hoping for. The task leading up to the Helsinki Follow-Up Meeting was to build on that foundation. In March 1991, a pre-Helsinki strategy and action plan, approved by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, was distributed to posts in CSCE countries. The areas on which Canada intended to concentrate were:

- enhancing the CSCE's conflict prevention function, exercised by the Council of Ministers with the support of the CPC;
- determining a procedure for convening meetings of the Committee of Senior Officials in emergency situations;
- ensuring high level political involvement in the CSCE process;
- strengthening the human dimension; and
- maintaining an "appropriate" economic dimension, so that CSCE development would be balanced across all three baskets.

### Conflict Prevention and the CPC

Canada continued to believe that a CSCE conflict prevention function was a sine qua non for the emerging European cooperative security architecture. This alone, in the absence of a collective defence alliance or positive security guarantees, would help give the Central and East European states, and to some extent the USSR, a sense of security. The Council of Ministers and the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) would have to be the focal points for conflict resolution, given the political nature of the task. However, because of the necessarily occasional character of their meetings, the Council and the CSO would need support, expertise and bureaucratic or logistical continuity, which is where the CPC came in.

The first meeting of the CPC Consultative Committee was held shortly after the Paris Summit, on December 3 in Vienna. In it, and subsequent Consultative Committee meetings through the spring of 1991, the pre-Summit division over the CPC's functions reopened. The "minimalist" camp, led by France, the US, the UK and Switzerland, wanted to concentrate the Centre's work exclusively on the mandate conferred by the Paris Charter, i.e. the application of CSBMs. Over the long term, the minimalists favoured the CPC evolving towards a "European Security Forum" as a combination of all efforts (negotiations, discussions and verification) in conventional arms control in Europe, combined with a continuous review of defence-related issues. Most EC members were sceptical of the CPC's ability to play a real role in the prevention and regulation of conflict; they believed that by reinforcing its role in the military domain, the Centre could at least preserve a semblance of living up to its name.