

Canadian contribution), the protection of human rights, and cooperation in the cultural, economic and environmental spheres.

The third section dealt with new CSCE structures and institutions. Here, the Charter established:

- meetings of Heads of State or Government on the occasion of follow-up meetings (which, as a rule, would be held every two years);
- annual -- or more frequent -- meetings of Foreign Ministers, to be known as the "Council." Council meetings were to provide the central forum for political consultations within the CSCE process;
- a Committee of Senior Officials, to prepare the meetings of the Council, carry out Council decisions and consider issues relevant to the CSCE;
- a Secretariat in Prague, to provide administrative support for the political consultations (the Secretariat opened in February 1991);
- a Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna, "to assist the Council in reducing the risk of conflict"; and
- an Office for Free Elections in Warsaw, to facilitate contacts and the exchange of information on elections within participating states.

The Charter also called for the creation of a CSCE parliamentary assembly.¹⁵

A supplementary document to the Charter set out more fully the institutional arrangements. The CPC's initial role would be to support the implementation of CSBMs. This would include facilitating consultation and cooperation regarding unusual military activities, the annual exchange of military information, the communications network, the annual implementation assessment meetings, and cooperation regarding hazardous military incidents. However, the Charter noted that the Centre might also assume other functions "which may be assigned to it in the future by the Council of the Foreign Ministers" regarding procedures for the conciliation of disputes as well as broader tasks relating to dispute settlement. The CPC would have a small secretariat consisting of a director, two officers and administrative and technical personnel. This secretariat would be supervised by a Consultative Committee composed of representatives from all participating states. As a rule, these would be the heads of delegation to the CSBM negotiations.

The Charter of Paris thus took the first steps towards institutionalizing the CSCE along the lines envisaged by Canada, by providing for regular ministerial meetings, a CSCE assembly and a Conflict Prevention Centre. It also, by calling for enhanced cooperation and commitments in all three baskets, met Canadian aims in reinforcing the comprehensive nature of the CSCE. In addition, the Charter, thanks to Canada's persistent urging, reinforced the transatlantic link, affirming that "the participation of both North American and European states is a fundamental characteristic of the CSCE; it underlies its past achievements and is essential to the future of the CSCE process."

Although Canada did not obtain as strong a CPC as it would have liked, the Charter contained within it a clear basis for future development of the CSCE's conflict prevention

¹⁵Parliamentary delegations met in Madrid in April 1991 to discuss practical questions related to the forum's establishment, and the inaugural meeting of the CSCE Parliamentary Assembly was held in Budapest in July 1992.