

When the walls come down and an atmosphere of co-operation is strengthened, a continental security system may follow. Possible models might be other regional organizations, especially the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization for African Unity (OAU). OAS members do not feel threatened by an outsider, but they have joined together to make certain that, should such a threat arise, it will be met through co-operation. There are considerable disparities between OAS members in their systems of government, economic development, military power and economic strength. But they do feel a common interest in defending their continent against an intruder. The OAU sometimes gives the impression of being far from united. However, its members have agreed that Africa's problems should

be settled by Africans, and this approach has been accepted by the United Nations.

Perhaps the most important achievement of a European security conference might be psychological. If it can lead to an acceptance of Europe as a single entity rather than a divided continent, it will have made a great step toward establishing security. This is important for technical and economic co-operation, for such things as the exchange of energy and control of pollution. More important, perhaps, will be the free movement of people. If security depends primarily on how people feel, it is surely essential that they meet each other and discover that the person they had previously thought of as a devil incarnate is, in fact, another human being like themselves.

Canada and European security

Canada has perceived the proposed Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe as part of a broad negotiating process between East and West. In Canada's view, the conference would be neither the culmination of that process nor an end in itself. Rather, it would be the opening of a new phase in negotiations aimed at dealing with, and ultimately resolving, the underlying causes of division and tension in Europe.

From the outset, Canada has emphasized "proper preparation" as a requirement for such a conference — hence its emphasis on the need for a discussion of substantive issues at the 34-nation multilateral preparatory talks under way in Helsinki since late November. Canada has felt that the Helsinki talks should explore areas of common ground to permit a realistic judgment on the prospects for success at a full-dress conference before a final decision on convening the conference was made.

As External Affairs Minister Mitchell Sharp put it at a press conference during the North Atlantic Council ministerial sessions in Brussels in December, the Helsinki talks should come to grips with the issues — to determine whether the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact partners are interested in something more than "blessing the status quo" in Europe.

In its opening general statement at the Helsinki talks, Canada said none of the participants would be content with a

conference that had only superficial results: "A conference which did no more than agree on high-sounding but empty forms of words would create a dangerous illusion of progress. This is why the Canadian Government is of the view that the conference should make concrete . . . contributions to security and co-operation; . . . it should try to agree on specific steps — however modest they may be in the first instance — to improve the situation . . .".

How does Canada qualify as a participant in such talks? There are a number of elements that have given Canada entrée to what was originally characterized as an "all-European" conference. Canada has been deeply involved in two world wars that inflamed the European continent. Canadian and European security are seen as interdependent. Canada has a direct stake in European security through maintenance of Canadian forces there as part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's military complement. Canada's traditions and cultures are in large part of European origin. It has firm historic and economic ties with Europe. Moreover, co-operation with European countries is an essential part of current Canadian policy of diversifying the country's external relations. A European security conference could affect not only the shape of Europe but the shape and tenor of transatlantic relations as well.

On the basis of NATO and Warsaw Pact stated positions and the first phase of