

man rights and the most difficult area for the Soviet Union to view dispassionately, especially in light of the surprising spontaneous echoes in the USSR and the other countries of Eastern Europe that have grown out of the publication of the Helsinki Final Act. Groups have arisen virtually everywhere throughout these closed societies demanding an accounting from governments of their actions in the light of their signed undertakings.

The Final Act has already produced some important results in certain countries of Eastern Europe, in the form of relaxation of some arbitrary and restrictive procedures which hinder the freedom of movement of their citizens, the free flow of information and access by journalists. But by and large, this part of the Final Act has produced many problems for the countries whose governments operate on the theory of total state control.

Little has been written here about Basket II, the Economic Basket, because the exchanges under this heading, economic relations, science and technology and the environment, have already reached important levels and were developing favourably. This might not be quite so true for the third of these fields, but that is as much a national problem as one of East-West co-operation. There are already a number of other mechanisms of co-operation, both bilateral and multilateral, to carry the process forward outside the strict framework of the CSCE process. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe has existed for more than 30 years. If its results regarding East-West co-operation have been slim, it is an existing mechanism which could take up new proposals as a result of the impetus given by the Final Act. Most CSCE countries have useful bilateral mechanisms for promoting an increasing range of exchanges and co-operation in technical and economic fields. While certain useful proposals could be put forward in this basket, the consensus focussed inevitably on Baskets I and III and the balance between them.

Throughout 1979 not everyone had been totally convinced of the positive character of the times. There were signs of an increased cooling of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. But whether there were reservations on the part of some more than on the part of others, there was a general agreement among Western governments that the approach to Madrid should be positive. Generally speaking, there remained a certain amount of optimism: the climate looked bright for a productive meeting.

It was suggested by some Western ministers, rather unkindly, but not incorrectly, that in order to save the CSCE process from 'bureaucratization' (that is to say management by diplomats and officials alone), there should be provision for ministerial level sessions at an appropriate time during the Madrid meeting to give the process the necessary political push and to keep all eyes on the broader meaning of the process in

terms of detente and an improving atmosphere in Europe.

### **Afghanistan invaded**

Then, as 1979 drew to a close, came the shock of the invasion of Afghanistan. So much of the optimism about the CSCE process was based on the belief that detente was of great importance not only to the East European states but to the Soviet Union itself and that the Soviet Union would try to preserve the necessary atmosphere of good relations to ensure that the benefits of detente would continue. The military action of the Soviet Union against a neutral and essentially friendly neighbour shattered this belief.

Remarkably, however, there was an instinctive agreement on all sides, for all of the difficulties that surrounded the CSCE process and the lack of very many dramatic results since 1975, that it would be to no one's advantage if the CSCE became a casualty of the crisis. Of course, the Soviet Union's action sobered expectations considerably, but in the concentrated thinking that went on in the wake of Afghanistan the adoption of confidence building measures and a new and determined push on arms control and disarmament was seen as being even more necessary than before. If the pollyanna glow in some capitals had dimmed, there was a general realisation that the CSCE process and the lines of communication it offered between East and West were extremely valuable. The crisis pointed out the necessity of mechanisms to acquaint each side with the thinking of the other, so as to remove errors of perception and analysis. If the confidence building measures seemed to be something of a misnomer, since what little confidence there was had been severely battered, the purpose of the measures to give reassurance about the nature and scope of military movements and manoeuvres assumed an even greater importance.

Human contacts and exchanges of all sorts, the subject of Basket III, needed to be kept in mind as parts of an important mechanism for creating the occasion for dialogue on whatever subject, to maintain East-West links.

This having been said, the already difficult task of ensuring a positive meeting of minds at Madrid had been made infinitely more complicated and the questions posed at the outset of this piece sprang up in many minds. If there was a general determination that the CSCE process should not founder, there was much less clarity on just how the Madrid conference could be approached so that something of a positive nature could emerge. All sides have subscribed to the concept of balance among the baskets, but what does this mean in actual practice? Was it reasonable to expect the Soviet Union to accept meekly criticism, under the examination of implementation, including a basic criticism of its conduct in Afghanistan? Its actions, after all, run directly counter to the declaration on principles guid-