

proach had any validity, that there should be a way of assessing the change in climate and in actual practices that came about as a result of the signature by the 35 nations of the Final Act. The importance attached to new proposals in the second element was based on the idea that such a valuable beginning in international co-operation should be capable of some sort of dynamic evolution and extension: The CSCE process could become the tangible instrument of detente.

### Belgrade Conference

It was agreed that two years after the 1975 signature of the Final Act, a further meeting would be held in Belgrade. The general assessment following the 1977 Belgrade meeting was that little came out of it. The Conference overran its projected time schedule by several weeks. Much of its time was taken up by recriminations in the human rights field directed at the Soviet Union and its allies. Predictably, the accusations were vehemently resisted. In such an atmosphere very little of a positive nature could emerge. Nonetheless, three conferences of a technical nature on specific subjects were agreed for the interim period between Belgrade and the next major gathering of the signatories: a scientific conference organized by the West German government, a legal conference on Compulsory Arbitration organised by the Swiss and a third conference, held in Malta, which was seen by the Maltese hosts as being more than a purely technical meeting on specific Mediterranean problems. (For a detailed account of the Belgrade CSCE, see *International Perspectives* July/August 1978.)

Looking back at Belgrade and its three offspring, there was much understandable disappointment. This was accompanied by the determination that the following CSCE meeting to be held in Madrid in November 1980 should have more positive results. The NATO allies set up a system of consultations on all aspects of the Madrid Meeting. Also, a vast bilateral network of contacts grew up, as virtually all signatories of the Final Act appointed senior officials as national coordinators for the forthcoming conference. These officials have been travelling widely to sound out views, to share thinking, to discuss proposals, and to harmonize positions so that Madrid might take on a more positive character than Belgrade. The contacts between East and West through this network of senior officials revealed a very great interest on the part of the East European nations in a successful conference. They saw in the CSCE process a means of underlining their individual national personalities and enlarging the radius of their international contacts. Furthermore, when detente flourished there was more room to manoeuvre, to move outward the edges of tolerance of the Soviet Union for national experiments and priorities. This interest was fully shared by the neutral and non-aligned European nations as well as by members of the Western alliance.

Proposals originated on all sides. The Eastern nations gave theirs particular prominence in a series of communiqués emanating from the Warsaw Pact Consultative Committee and through speeches by President Brezhnev himself, notably a speech in East Berlin on October 6, 1979.

An area which gained a great deal of attention concerned confidence building measures. It was linked generally in the minds of the Western Allies with the various discussions that were going ahead in the SALT process, the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction negotiations in Vienna and the work going on in other disarmament fora. They were seen as an important additional element in a new push toward meaningful results in the arms control and disarmament fields: a sort of new try for the new decade, as spelled out in the NATO communiqué of December 14, 1979.

Confidence building measures are particularly well-suited to the CSCE process. It is a happy combination of practical proposals with concrete and visible benefits, linked with idealism, or optimism, that touches the imagination of people. Generating a positive psychology is one of the chief characteristics of the CSCE. A general belief seemed to be growing on all sides that something really important could be done in the political basket of the CSCE under the general title of 'confidence building,' which could make a major contribution to extending the dialogue of Europe, which was the essential underlying purpose of the CSCE process. If military manoeuvres could be limited, or constrained, as the term of art has it; if they were fully predictable and visible, then there was greater reassurance for all. It would also mean that troop movements not connected with exercises would stand out more clearly and thus be more difficult to undertake. All of this would be of great value for lowering tension in Europe.

A further proposal coming from France has also excited interest. The proposal foresees a 'Conference on Disarmament in Europe,' to be approached in phases, beginning with a series of confidence building measures. It is to be confined to conventional forces only, which again has many attractions for the West which is particularly concerned with the current imbalance in these forces. It also called for application of its provisions to an area stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals, a vast piece of geography echoing General de Gaulle's concept of a Europe defined in these terms. One can guess, however, that such a concept will not be received with unbounded joy in Moscow.

It was generally recognized on all sides that the CSCE process should proceed on the basis of balance between the three main areas, or baskets. It was feared by many Westerners that a heavy overloading of the political basket, albeit with some distinctly attractive proposals, would tend to draw attention away from Basket III entitled *Co-operation in Humanitarian and Other Fields*. This is the key area for discussions of hu-