

the CSCE's real problem when it comes to conflict prevention and management: that of political will.

CSCE institutions, now that ideological solidarity no longer motivates its participants, could provide institutional impetus for decisions and actions which states may not be prepared to take on their own. Yet institutional impetus is of little use if states are not prepared to fund and, more importantly, to authorize collective action. Political will is the cornerstone of CSCE activity. All the "early warnings" received, all the dispute settlement procedures in place, and all the resources the institutions can muster are useless without participating State willingness to address problems and conflicts, and to address them multilaterally through the CSCE.²⁶

The Canadian position throughout has been to endow the CSCE with conflict prevention and management tools so that the CSCE is ready and able to act when the will to use it arises. Moreover, Canada -- with a functionalist bent to its foreign policy -- has hoped that the very process of deepening commitments and creating mechanisms by consensus will help to generate political will. This "build it and they will come" attitude has contrasted with the more sceptical "if they come, build it" attitude of some other Western delegations. The jury is still out as to which is more effective. As it stands, the CSCE is not yet as central to post-Cold War European developments as Canada had hoped, but it is by no means on the sidelines. As one in a range of complementary organizations, it is not a bad option. And, by early on staking a strong position in the debate over the CSCE's evolution, Canada helped to secure for the CSCE, and thus for Canada, a continuing role in European security issues.

The future extent and nature of that role will depend on a number of factors. The CSCE may grow in importance as Russia reasserts itself, since the CSCE is the only European security organization in which Russia is a full member. However, as the Central and East Europeans become more sure of themselves and more engaged with the EU and NATO, Canada's ability to find ready allies within the CSCE may lessen. Moreover, since the questions facing the CSCE have less and less to do with the construction of mechanisms and more and more to do with the day-to-day management of continuing problems, Canada's voice may diminish in relation to those who are closest to those problems. Even on the margins, however, there is likely to be room for thoughtful Canadian contributions. For example, in the current development of the generic peacekeeping paper and the Georgian monitoring operation, it is delegation interest rather than unique expertise that spurs Canadian participation (since Canada's experience in peacekeeping is now equalled by most Europeans). But precisely because Canada has no special interest at stake, it is often able to spot practical problems of implementation that states closer to the situation, with their own agendas at hand, have missed. Canada cannot assume an automatic audience for its interventions, but it can -- if it invests the necessary time in preparation -- continue to make

²⁶*The Helsinki Follow-Up Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe*, A Report Prepared by the Staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Washington, D.C., September 1992), p. 7.