

that of West Germany, which, under the umbrella of the Helsinki Act and other accords, has brought about the repatriation of more than 60,000 Germans from countries to the east.

The hope for expanded commercial exchanges has figured in the calculations of men on both sides of the East-West divide, and on the Western side the idea of "linkages" also plays a role. Progress, or at least participation, in CSCE will, it is fondly hoped, facilitate progress in strategic-arms talks and talks on mutual force reductions.

The Kremlin, on its side, has already achieved one of its primary objects: a form of international sanction for the wartime territorial acquisitions of the U.S.S.R. in Eastern Europe and the Baltic states. "The participating states regard as inviolable all one another's frontiers as well as the frontiers of all states in Europe, and therefore they will refrain now and in the future from assaulting these frontiers," declared the Helsinki Act.

Soviet view

The Soviet Union did not spend 20 years or more preparing CSCE to achieve only that, however. It views the CSCE as a vehicle for helping to realize the old Tsarist ambition to make Russia the dominant power throughout Europe, West as well as East. To advance this cause, the U.S.S.R. is advocating all-European commissions on energy, the environment and transportation. The climate at Belgrade was not conducive to pushing these ideas very hard, but more will be heard about them at future CSCE meetings, such as the one planned for Madrid in 1980. In the meantime, the design is also being pursued through such organs as the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

To be fair, it has its counterpart in the determination of some Western powers, particularly the United States and West Germany, to use the opportunities afforded by CSCE to increase their influence in Eastern Europe. It is fair game for these states to use the Act to draw closer to, for example, Romania, Hungary and Poland. The Act is full of references to the need for improving relations and promoting co-operation among its signatories - without exclusion or ideological limitation. It also happens to be very popular with certain East European countries because it forcefully lays down the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states, which to them means non-interference by the Soviet Union.

An intriguing glimpse of the problems Moscow faced in keeping the diverse and often divergent regimes of Eastern Europe in line at Belgrade was offered by a news

dispatch that told of Romania skipping East-Bloc caucuses and Hungary and Poland frequently pressing moderation on Mr Vorontsov.

An unnamed diplomat from a "neutral" nation was quoted as saying: "It is these caucuses, as well as the more open debates, that are enabling some of these countries to assert their own independence and their own voices. And most of them tell me they hope this will spill over well after everyone has left Belgrade and Helsinki is only a vague memory."

For a complex of varied, subtle and sometimes conflicting reasons, then, the impulse to keep the CSCE going is widely shared, notwithstanding the exceptionally modest results achieved at Belgrade.

Cafik speech

A good indication of its capacity to overcome was afforded by Norman Cafik, Canada's Minister of State for Multiculturalism and Special Representative of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Don Jamieson, in his wind-up address to the Belgrade meeting. Mr. Cafik went to great lengths to emphasize Canada's disappointment at the outcome. He stressed the importance of public attitudes towards the whole CSCE exercise, and even went so far as to suggest that the Madrid meeting might be a last-chance effort. "At Madrid," he said, "we shall have a clearer picture of where we stand. It will then be five years from the signature of the Final Act. Public opinion in our countries is not likely to grant us much of a further reprieve if we are not seen by them to have pursued the course we charted together at Helsinki with a greater sense of commitment and with greater imagination." The real test of the CSCE lay in "the commitment we are prepared to give to its continuity, and in whether concrete adjustments will be made in our national policies".

Then, quite suddenly, Mr Cafik changed direction, ending up on an entirely different note. "Some undoubtedly feel frustrated and disappointed in the concrete achievements to date," he said. "I would ask them whether, a decade ago, they would have even envisaged that meetings such as this would ever have taken place. Can anyone have doubts as to the value of nations of different ideologies sitting down together and freely and frankly discussing their mutual concerns? . . . As long as this process of dialogue continues, we need not be discouraged."

If the Minister's change of direction seemed somewhat startling, at least it was in tune with the prevailing tendency among Western delegations to come to terms with