ON THE EVE OF THE CSCE SUMMIT IN PARIS

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The developments in the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) continue at full speed. Not only has the Copenhagen meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE which was held from 5 to 29 June 1990 resulted in the adoption of an extensive concluding document, the preparations for a Summit Conference of the CSCE in Paris in November have also made good progress.

It may be recalled that at the end of 1989 the Soviet President Gorbachev launched the idea of a special summit conference which should deal with the new political situation in Europe after the dramatic revolutionary developments in Eastern Europe. At this summit the main lines of a new political map of Europe should be drawn and/or ratified. Although at first the reaction in other CSCE States was rather uncertain, gradually a certain consensus has been reached. On 5 June 1990 this resulted in the decision by the Foreign Ministers of the CSCE States en marge of the Copenhagen meeting to establish a preparatory committee (PrepCom). This PrepCom is charged to prepare the summit conference which should deal with the new political situation in Europe after the dramatic revolutionary developments in Eastern Europe. At this summit the main lines of a new political map of Europe should be drawn and/or ratified.

An important milestone on the road to the CSCE summit conference was the meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the NATO Member States in London in the beginning of July. On 6 July this special meeting of the North Atlantic Council issued the "London Declaration on a transformed North Atlantic Alliance". This Declaration not only dealt with a number of important principles for a transformation of NATO (boiling down to a strengthening of the political role of the alliance), but it also contained a number of proposals concerning a more prominent role of the CSCE in the future of Europe. These proposals were rather surprising in view of the fact that (most) NATO States so far had been rather hesitant about strengthening of the CSCE. However, the desire to persuade the USSR to accept the NATO membership of a united Germany induced the NATO States to consider further-reaching options concerning the CSCE - which the USSR wants to transform into some kind of collective security system in Europe - than ever before.

The London Declaration proposed the setting of "new standards for the establishment, and preservation, of free societies". The Declaration mentioned in particular the endorsement of "CSCE principles on the right to free and fair elections; CSCE commitments to respect and uphold the rule of law; CSCE guidelines for enhancing economic cooperation, based on the development of free and competitive market economies; and CSCE cooperation on environmental protection".

The most interesting proposals concerned the institutionalization of the CSCE which should become "a forum for wider political dialogue in a more united Europe". The NATO Declaration enumerated six proposals in this area:

- a programme for regular consultations among member governments at the Heads of State and Government or Ministerial level, at least once each year, with other periodic meetings of officials to prepare for and follow up on these consultations;
- a schedule of CSCE review conferences once every two years to
assess progress toward a Europe whole and free;
- a small CSCE secretariat to coordinate these meetings and conferences;
- a CSCE mechanism to monitor elections in all the CSCE countries, on the basis of the Copenhagen Document;
- a CSCE Centre for the Prevention of Conflict that might serve as a forum for exchanges of military information, discussion of unusual military activities, and the conciliation of disputes involving CSCE member states; and
- a CSCE parliamentary body, the Assembly of Europe, to be based on the existing parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg, and include representatives of all CSCE member States."

The London Declaration also stated that the selection of "the sites of these new CSCE institutions should reflect the fact that the newly democratic countries of Central and Eastern Europe form part of the political structures of the new Europe."

The proposals of the NATO Summit constituted a major starting-point for the negotiations in the framework of the PrepCom which started its activities on the 9th of July in Vienna. For convenience sake it was decided that the PrepCom would make use of the secretarial facilities of the Conference on Confidence- and Security-building Measures (usually referred to as the "European Disarmament Conference") which is being held in the CSCE framework in Vienna since March 1989. Although one may only speculate at this moment about the possible results of the summit conference, the main issues to be dealt with have already been provisionally decided.1

In all probability the agenda will contain the following four main points.

a) In the first place the Heads of State and Government of the 34 CSCE States2 will officially confirm all CSCE principles which have been agreed upon at previous CSCE meetings. In particular it will confirm the importance of the principles of the rule of law and of parliamentary democracy in all CSCE States as laid down in the concluding documents of the Bonn Conference on Economic Co-operation (March/April 1990) and the Copenhagen meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension (June 1990).

b) In the second place, the summit will extensively deal with all possible forms of institutionalization of the CSCE process. A great number of proposals have already been submitted by CSCE States.3 In general it may be observed that the East European States aim at a far-reaching institutionalization of the hitherto rather loosely organized CSCE process. Some of their proposals boil down to a wish to transform the CSCE into an effectively functioning pan-European security system. Western States are less enthusiastic about such plans; in particular the NATO Member States fear an undermining of NATO which they consider to be essential for a stable political situation in Europe. Although the West-German (now German) government is the least hesitant about a further institutionalization of the CSCE process, in general the Western CSCE States only favour a rather moderate development in that direction (see the above-mentioned NATO proposals which constituted a step forward in relation to the previously held positions). This will undoubtedly result in the establishment of a small, technical secretariat. This secretariat will fill the often painfully felt vacuum of a permanent organ which may take care of simple, but important activities such as the keeping of CSCE archives. A secretariat may also enhance the effective functioning of the supervisory mechanism for the human dimension of the CSCE. The three Benelux States have tabled a proposal concerning a far-reaching European system of peaceful settlement of disputes which should contain political and judicial methods. Although it is unrealistic to expect that the Paris summit will decide on a detailed scheme of peaceful settlement of disputes, it may take decisions on some main principles. These principles may then be further substantiated in concrete rules