

U.N. WATCH

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Fragile Eggs in Basket III

The Helsinki agreements (officially, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, CSCE) signed in 1973 by thirty-five countries contained what are known as three baskets: Basket I on the principles of national security; Basket II on commercial and industrial cooperation; and Basket III on civil liberties and individual human rights. Basket III was inserted by Western Europeans over the protests of the Eastern bloc. The Final Act of CSCE contained a provision for subsequent meetings to determine compliance by the signatory powers. The first such meeting in Belgrade in 1978 was low in achievement but did set a time and place for the next meeting—November, 1980, in Madrid. For the Madrid delegation President Carter has appointed former attorney general Griffin Bell chairman and Max M. Kampelman, head of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, co-chairman.

In an unusual move the State Department invited interested groups to a meeting at New York's Hunter College in May to discuss the Helsinki accords and the upcoming Madrid session. Mr. Kampelman said the purpose of the meeting was to get the views of concerned Americans and that similar conferences would be held in other cities.

Meanwhile, "Helsinki watchers" who took seriously the human rights provisions of the Final Act have been arrested and jailed in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia.

"The Map Is Not the Territory"

While Secretary General Kurt Waldheim was making the opening remarks at still another disarmament conference, one million dollars a minute, as he pointed out, was being spent for armaments around the world. The annual meeting of nongovernmental organizations sponsored by the United Nations Department of Public Information from June 13 to 19 drew six hundred representatives from thirty-five countries. The theme of the conference was "The Arms Race and the Human Race." Once again the human race lost.

Panelists from the Soviet Union, India, the United States, Canada, Sweden, and Third World countries bemoaned the use of weapons to settle international disputes; asked for a halt to the production of nuclear weapons; warned of the possible destruction of the human race; and called upon the governments of the world to abandon their lunatic behavior.

The Russians again said that the USSR was a peace-loving nation while the U.S. and NATO were preparing for war. An American speaker questioned Russia's peaceful intentions in Afghanistan and the motives behind the Soviet transport of Cuban soldiers to Angola and Ethiopia. Statistics were presented to show the huge

Soviet expenditures on weaponry over the past fifteen years (USSR figures are so secret that in SALT negotiations Americans supply the data for both countries).

Two prominent speakers, Admiral Gene LaRocque, Ret., Director of the Center for Defense Information, and Olaf Palme, former prime minister of Sweden, described the worst aspects of the arms race and tried, without success, to end on a hopeful note. LaRocque noted that in 1970 the United States had 4,000 nuclear weapons and the Soviet Union had 1,600. Today the U.S. has 10,000 and the USSR 8,000. Only obliquely did the conferees refer to the real core of the war problem—the aim of most U.N. members, developed and developing, to acquire more weapons than their neighbors. Fanatic nationalism, as a festering sore in international relations, was rarely mentioned.

About ten years ago a young historian counted the wars since the founding of the U.N. At seventy-nine she stopped. It appears that these peace experts, politicians, and pro bono publico "true believers" are, in semanticist Alfred Korzybski's penetrating phrase, confusing the map with the territory in the belief that meetings held in pleasant surroundings, speeches printed in six languages, and massive reports show a record of accomplishment.

Does anybody remember the Oxford Oath?

The Last Refuge

President Carter recently asked the United Nations Commission for Refugees to help screen the Cubans arriving in Florida. The agency responded immediately and without fanfare, as it usually does.

The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, as it was originally called, was created in 1945 to help settle and repatriate five and a half million Europeans who were living in makeshift camps or in foreign countries as a result of World War II. With the usual optimism of the postwar years, the U.N. body was to be disbanded in 1950 in the expectation that there would be few refugees in a world at peace. Instead the High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that the current world total of refugees and displaced persons is ten to twelve million. Some examples: 200,000 displaced persons on Cyprus; 80,000 registered refugees in Thailand; the Sudan lists 270,000 Ethiopians; Mozambique has 80,000 Zimbabwe refugees; Malaysia reports 63,000 Indochinese who need help; Bangladesh has 200,000 refugees from Burma. Zaire, Uganda, and Equatorial Guinea are all burdened with refugee families fleeing their native lands. Somalia, a country of four million, is said to have a refugee population of 500,000.

No one wants these people, and the High Commissioner's office operates on an inadequate budget—\$223 million for 1980.

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