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## Helsinki Final Act

The Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in 1975 called for a meeting of scientists to discuss "current and future developments in science and to promote the expansion of contacts, communications and exchange of information between scientific institutions and scientists." Planned by the participating National Commissions on Security and Cooperation in Europe, this first scientific forum will take place in Hamburg from 18 to 29 February 1980. A major part of the agenda includes three substantive areas of consideration by "appropriate subsidiary working bodies." They are the exact and natural sciences, medicine, and the humanities and social sciences.

It is the conviction of the Committee of Concerned Scientists that the scientific forum can make its most significant contribution by stressing the structure of international scientific relationships rather than the substantive scientific problems. By concentrating on current and future developments in science as such—the first part of the Final Act's mandate—the forum would cover the same ground as the hundreds of international scientific meetings that already take place annually. Moreover, it would only cover this ground inadequately, since the breadth of topics to be considered would make adequate coverage extremely difficult.

In our view, the U.S. delegation should focus primarily on the second portion of the Helsinki Final Act's mandate for the forum—that is, on evaluating current modes of scientific interaction among individuals and institutions of the signatory countries. This is, indeed, the position taken by the United States at the CSCE experts meeting in Bonn in July. In this area a large number of questions beg for discussion, including the following:

- Are international scientific organizations, as presently constituted, adequately furthering exchanges?
- If they are not, what correctives need to be instituted?
- If, as discussions at the planning meeting last summer revealed, certain countries feel isolated from international science, why is this so and what can be done to remedy the situation?

In particular, delegates from the United States and other countries should discuss, in a constructive but forthright manner, the obstacles that exist to the kind of free scientific interchange envisioned in the Helsinki Final Act. They should attempt to determine why Soviet and Eastern bloc governments and academic officials exclude from scientific activities those who have sought permission to emigrate, in accordance with the Helsinki Final Act, or have spoken out for full implementation of the Act itself. They should also ask why Soviet and Eastern bloc scientists invited to international conferences are frequently not permitted to attend.

This discussion should by no means be limited to the Soviet Union and its allies. A number of American computer scientists have complained that our government is interfering, on grounds of national security, with their right to communicate freely the results of their research.

The forum should begin to formulate proposals designed to break down harmful intrusions on free interchange. For example, national security considerations have been invoked by both East and West to limit cooperation at various times and on various projects. At the forum, scientists could begin to formulate guidelines limiting the impingement of security interests on international scientific cooperation.

The signatories of the Helsinki Final Act recognized that scientific advancement brings "the effective solution of problems of common interest and the improvement of the conditions of human life." Scientific progress, however, is dependent on free international exchange of scientists and scientific information. With the proper focus, the scientific forum can do much to enhance the quality of international scientific exchanges.—MAX GOTTESMAN and MARK KAC, *Cochairmen*, and MARK MELLMAN, *former director, Committee of Concerned Scientists, 9 East 40 Street, New York 10016*