

Negotiating one's own demise?
The GDR's Foreign Ministry and the CSCE negotiations
Plans, preparations, tactics and presumptions

by Oliver Bange and Stephan Kieninger¹

The GDR played a central role in the CSCE negotiations. Despite initial successes in the early 1970s, détente turned out to be a mixed blessing for the GDR. On the one hand – after the inner-German *modus vivendi* – the CSCE negotiations enabled Honecker's new leadership team to participate in international politics without any discrimination. The CSCE Final Act brought about the GDR's international recognition as the legitimate second German state. On the other hand the German question – being prevalent in the background of the CSCE talks – remained undecided. The Helsinki Final Act was no "*Ersatz* peace".² Bonn's social-liberal government succeeded in its revisionist efforts to have established in the Helsinki Final Act's catalogues of principles a regulation about the peaceful change of frontiers,³ clearly aiming at German reunification and the demise of the GDR. Furthermore – in a kind of tit-for-tat deal – in return for Western recognition of the status quo, the Soviet Union and its Allies had to accept what became basket III of the Final Act: freer movement of people, information and ideas. Freer movement was synonymous with Western efforts to penetrate the Soviet orbit and

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² John J. Maresca speaks of CSCE as an "*Ersatz*peace" over Germany. John J. Maresca: *To Helsinki – The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1973-1975*, Durham 1987, p. 80.

³ Gottfried Niedhart: *Peaceful Change of Frontiers as a Crucial Element in the West German Strategy of Transformation*, in: Oliver Bange/Gottfried Niedhart: *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*, London/New York 2007, pp. 65-84.

to induce liberalising change. Being the Warsaw Pact's most Western outpost, the GDR of course had to pay utmost attention to this threat. Eventually, the Helsinki Final Act's transformative elements would outweigh its status quo implications. In early 1969, when the Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Committee took an offensive line in its efforts for détente with its Budapest Appeal to convoke a European Security Conference,¹ such a development was not predictable – but Western stratagems for transforming communist rule in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union had already been established and partly been implemented.²

The inevitably limited purpose of this E-Dossier and of the documents from the GDR's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MfAA) lies in drawing up a picture of how the GDR's policy toward European Security lost its offensive momentum. Yet, despite the GDR's pivotal role in the CSCE negotiations, historiography has tended to ignore this specific question,³ while on a more general level the beginnings of the CSCE "have not yet been analysed on the basis of internal documents".⁴ Although the authors can refer to some previous studies about the GDR's foreign policy in general,⁵ as well as to a few analyses of its détente policy⁶, crucial questions remain. First and foremost these desiderata concern the GDR's reaction towards the

¹ Appeal for a European Security Conference, 17 March 1969, in: Vojtech Mastny/Malcolm Byrne (eds): *A Cardboard Castle? An inside History of the Warsaw Pact 1955-1991*, pp. 330-332.

² Well before the start of Brandt's Chancellorship in October 1969, Brandt and Bahr had developed a complex and long-term strategy both for overcoming Soviet rule and for creating a European Security System that would allow for an eventual German unification. For the strategy of transforming Soviet rule by means of communication, see Gottfried Niedhart: *Revisionistische Elemente und die Initiierung friedlichen Wandels in der neuen Ostpolitik 1967-1974*, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28 (2002), pp. 233ff. For the security dimension of Brandt's and Bahr's strategic blueprint, see Oliver Bange: *An Intricate Web – Ostpolitik, the European Security System and German Unification*, in: Oliver Bange/Gottfried Niedhart: *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*, Oxford/New York 2007, pp. 43-64. For the transformative rational of Lyndon Johnson's Bridge Building policy vis-à-vis Eastern Europe, see Thomas A. Schwartz: *Lyndon Johnson and Europe – In the shadow of Vietnam*, Cambridge (MA), 2003. For de Gaulle's and Pompidou's visions for overcoming the division of Europe, see Marie Pierre Rey: *La tentation du rapprochement: France et URSS à l'heure de la détente (1964-1974)*, Paris 1991.

³ For an introduction to research in the GDR's foreign policy, see Oliver Bange: *Die Aussenpolitik der DDR – Plädoyer fuer ein vernachlaessigtes Forschungsfeld*, in: Friedrich Boll et al.: *Archiv fuer Sozialgeschichte* 44 (2004), pp. 492-500, here p. 492.

⁴ Jost Duelffer: *Europa im Ost-West-Konflikt 1945-1991*, Munich 2004, pp. 187f.

⁵ Joachim Scholtyseck: *Die Aussenpolitik der DDR*, Munich 2003; Ingrid Muth: *Die DDR-Aussenpolitik 1949-1972 – Inhalte, Strukturen, Mechanismen*, Berlin 2003; Benno Eide-Siebs: *Die Aussenpolitik der DDR 1976-1989 – Strategien und Grenzen*, Paderborn 1999; Hermann Wentker: *Außenpolitik in engen Grenzen - Die DDR im internationalen System*, Munich 2007.

⁶ Jochen Staadt: *Die geheime Westpolitik der SED 1960-1970 – Von der gesamtdeutschen Orientierung zur sozialistischen Nation*, Berlin 1993; Monika Kaiser: *Machtwechsel von Ulbricht zu Honecker, Funktionsmechanismen der SED-Diktatur in Konfliktsituationen 1962-1972*, Berlin 1997; Karl Heinz Schmidt: *Dialog ueber Deutschland, Studien zur Deutschlandpolitik von KPdSU und SED, 1960-1979*, Baden-Baden 1998; Mary Sarotte: *Dealing with the devil – East German, Détente and Ostpolitik, 1969-1973*, Chapel Hill 2001. For further accounts about the GDR's foreign relations between 1949 and 1990, see Oliver Bange's review article fn. 5. For valuable accounts from eyewitnesses, see Siegfried Bock, Ingrid Muth, Hermann Schwiesau (eds): *DDR-Aussenpolitik im Rueckspiegel, Diplomaten im Gesprach*, Muenster 2004. Siegfried Bock's essay about "Die DDR im KSZE-Prozess", pp. 102-117, is particularly relevant.

Neue Ostpolitik as pursued by the Brandt/Scheel government. When and why did the GDR give up her plans for a German-German confederation and start pursuing a rather defensive posture via the FRG? Through which channels were Moscow's guidelines for a new, more constructive GDR course in the CSCE negotiations communicated to the East Germans? Why did the new SED leadership under Erich Honecker eventually fail to pursue its security interests more forcefully in the CSCE negotiations, specifically after the warnings by its own secret service over the consequences of a CSCE agreement to the GDR's internal stability?

Due to this publication's limited scope – the focus is solely on documents from the GDR's Ministry of Foreign Affairs – neither top level politics between East Berlin and Moscow nor the above mentioned predictions of the GDR's secret services can be analysed.¹ Rather, the focus lies on examining the strategic and tactical options for the GDR's position and its interest in the CSCE negotiations outlined in the papers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this respect, the MfAA *Grundsatzabteilung*, under the aegis of Dr. Siegfried Bock, is of particular importance.² Between 1969 and 1971, Bock's department had to change its approach towards European security by almost about 180 degrees.

Before the Prague Spring was crushed – and even afterwards – Walter Ulbricht's policy towards the FRG was shaped by his belief that the interior tumults in West Germany offered inroads for socialist subversion. The old SED chairman had not abandoned his aspiration for a socialist kind of German-German confederation.³ Accordingly, in a memorandum about "further measures concerning European security" of February 1968, the MfAA Western European Division emphasised that "establishing a united German state is only possible under the conditions of socialism".⁴ The policies of Johnson and Brandt vis-à-vis the Soviet sphere of influence were succinctly perceived in April 1968 as "directed at political and ideological undermining of the socialist states, against the communist [...] movement".⁵ In advance of the the Prague Spring, the MfAA Soviet Union Department correctly perceived Moscow to be aiming to "intensify the theoretical struggle against *Ostpolitik* as a part of the ideological diversion of imperialism".⁶

¹ Being conscious of the limited scope of this publication, the authors intend to prepare two further E-Dossiers on top-level politics between Moscow and East Berlin and on the predictions of the GDR's secret services with regard to the CSCE.

² Siegfried Bock (*1926) headed the GDR's delegation to the CSCE negotiations from the start of the Multilateral Preparatory Talks in November 1972 to the Helsinki Summit in summer 1975.

³ Oliver Bange: *Détente und Ostpolitik, Die Anfaenge 1966-1969*, Munich 2008 (forthcoming).

⁴ Doc. 1.

⁵ Doc. 2.

⁶ Ibid.

However, and in spite of the Soviets' developing pragmatic status quo policy in Europe in the aftermath of Prague 1968 and in the run-up to the general elections in the FRG in autumn 1969,¹ the GDR continued its offensive strategy against West Germany, trying to counter Johnson's and Brandt's policy of penetration. A European Security Conference was seen as a vehicle for this quite aggressive posture. In October 1969, a position paper prepared by Siegfried Bock's department in the MfAA, the *Grundsatzabteilung*, elaborated for over fifty pages about "containment of the effects of the aggressive special pact between West German and American imperialism", "roll back of US influence in Europe", "preventing the further development of Western European integration towards a political unit", "roll back of NATO's influence and the eventual overcoming of this aggressive pact system", and "support for the struggle for socialism and democracy in Western European countries".²

But instead of driving a wedge into NATO, the SED leadership under Ulbricht with its approach of intensified class struggle vis-à-vis the FRG, completely lost whatever room of manoeuvre it had, or thought it had – both towards the FRG as well as in its relations with Moscow. Whereas Ulbricht continued to insist that the FRG had to recognise the GDR fully according to international law, Moscow prevented the old SED chairman from becoming a stumbling block in its exclusive relations with the newly-established Bonn government.³ Moscow's national interest necessitated using the window of opportunity for getting Bonn's recognition of the post-war European settlement both as an end in its own right and as a means for starting negotiations with the USA about arms control and the status of Berlin. From late 1969, Moscow and Ulbricht's successor Erich Honecker closely cooperated in their efforts to exclude the SED chairman from foreign policy decision-making. Eventually, with Moscow's help, Honecker forced Ulbricht's resignation in May 1971.⁴

The shift from Ulbricht's strategy of intensified class struggle with the FRG towards Honecker's posture of "drawing a dividing line and digging oneself in"⁵ became visible in a memorandum about "Attitudes and measures of the states of the Warsaw Treaty for convoking a conference on European security and cooperation", written in October 1970.

¹ Gottfried Niedhart/Oliver Bange: Die "Relikte der Nachkriegszeit" beseitigen. Ostpolitik in der zweiten aussenpolitischen Formationsphase der Bundesrepublik Deutschland im Uebergang von den Sechziger- zu den Siebzigerjahren, in: Archiv fuer Sozialgeschichte 44 (2004), pp. 415-448; see particularly the chapter about the GDR's limited room of manoeuvre during the Berlin crisis in 1969 which served as a forerunner for the launch of détente in autumn 1969.

² Doc. 3.

³ See memorandum of conversation between Ulbricht and Gromyko, 24 February 1970. Foundation Archive of the Parties and Mass Organisations of the Former GDR in the Federal Archives (SAPMO): (Ulbricht's office files) DY 30/3526.

⁴ Jochen Stelkens: Machtwechsel in Ost-Berlin – Der Sturz Walter Ulbrichts 1971, in: Vierteljahreshefte fuer Zeitgeschichte, Jg. 45 (1997), pp. 503-533.

⁵ Bange: Détente and Ostpolitik, p. 876.

Although parts of the text continued to address an "intensified ideological competition"¹ to spread socialism by means of political agitation in left wing parties and trade unions, the conclusions followed Moscow's and Honecker's new approach. The MfAA *Grundsatzabteilung* saw the necessity to "counteract the tendency of shifting the focus of the conference to problems of inter-systemic economic and scientific and technological cooperation."² A dilatory handling of the status quo question might serve as a means to that end."³ However, at the same time, the *Grundsatzabteilung* realised clearly that, after the Treaty of Moscow, any future European security conference could not offer new or more qualified status quo elements: "With the pan-European agreement about respecting the territorial integrity of all European states as well as their borders, the options of a European Security Conference for status-quo arrangements end. The question of normalising the relations of capitalist states – including the FRG – towards the GDR, as well as the recognition of West Berlin's status as an autonomous political unit, being a status quo question, cannot be items on the conference agenda."⁴ Compared to Ulbricht's enthusiastic appeal for a "counter-offensive",⁵ the GDR's prospects became even gloomier as the *Grundsatzabteilung* realised that the Warsaw Pact's proposal for intensified East-West cooperation in the fields of commercial, economic and scientific/technological relations paved the way for Western efforts "to use the comprehensive application of relations of peaceful coexistence to increase the anti-socialist subversion and diversion of the Warsaw Treaty states".⁶

The GDR's answer in a future ESC lay in the above-mentioned "dilatory handling of the status quo question".⁷ By autumn 1971, due to the pressure from Moscow to accelerate the inner-German negotiations,⁸ the GDR had completed its 180-degree turn in its policies both towards towards Moscow as well as towards Bonn. Now the GDR goals were reduced to

¹ Doc. 4.

² In their Prague conference on 30-31 October 1969, the Warsaw Pact's Foreign Ministers drew up a proposal for a European Security Conference including two items: The first item dealt with the principle of renunciation of force, the second with intensifying commercial, economic and scientific/technological relations between European countries across bloc boundaries. Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security (PHP), Records of the Meetings of the Deputy Foreign Ministers, edited by Csaba Békés, Anna Locher and Christian Nuenlist. See <<http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/collections/colltopic.cfm?lng=en&id=16562&navinfo=15700>>.

³ Doc. 4.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Strictly confidential "Disposition fuer die Skizze einer langfristigen Politik gegenueber Westdeutschland", 8.2.1968. The disposition is in the papers of "AG Aussen- und Deutschlandpolitik", from Walter Ulbricht's Office. SAPMO: DY 30/3311.

⁶ Doc. 4.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Brezhnev to Ulbricht, 16 October 1970. SAPMO: DY 30/3530. Brezhnev' speech at the meeting of the Political Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact in East Berlin, 2 December 1970. SAPMO: DY 30/J IV 2/202/525.

"guaranteeing peace in Europe", securing state borders, and economic and other cooperation.¹ The offensive objectives of autumn 1969 completely vanished. In 1971 the GDR's essentially defensive posture lay in developing socialism in one's own country.

In advance of the Multilateral Preparatory Talks, the MfAA *Grundsatzabteilung* succinctly identified the Western interests in the CSCE. Although the NATO and EEC states officially welcomed the Warsaw Pact's agenda as presented in the Prague declaration of early 1972² – renunciation of force, cooperation in the fields of economics and science and technology, and military détente – their true interest lay in inducing liberalising change in the Soviet-style communist systems. According to the MfAA's analysis, "by aiming at ideological subversion they try to give the Warsaw Treaty states' proposals a different content, as well as trying to conclude concrete measures according to their conception of 'freer movement of ideas, information and people'."³

This was how matters stood when the Multilateral Preparatory Talks (MPT) for the CSCE began on 22 November 1972, in Dipoli near Helsinki. The clash between the Warsaw Pact's status quo approach and the Western strategy of transforming communist rule was predictable. Right at the beginning of the talks, the first confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact states occurred. It was about the conference's seating order. What at first sight seemed to be a rather peripheral affair in fact revealed a fundamental conflict of interest between Bonn and East Berlin. The West German delegation insisted that the seating order had to be arranged according to the French alphabet. Bonn wanted "Germany" to be the key word in its designation as well as in the GDR's. Bonn intended to have the GDR delegation sit next, between its delegation and the United States. Although the Soviet Union and the GDR claimed that the seating order had to be arranged according the English alphabet,⁴ the West German delegation claimed a first victory over East Berlin. The huge majority of states simply had no stake in the seating order and therefore did not oppose Bonn's proposal.⁵

¹ Doc. 5.

² In addition to the items "renunciation of force" and "economic, commercial and scientific-technological cooperation", Brezhnev proposed to expand the agenda of the CSCE by including "military détente". See Brezhnev's speech at the XIII. Meeting of the Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Committee, 25-26 January 1972 in Prague, SAPMO: DY 30/526, cited from Vojtech Mastny, Christian Nuenlist, Anna Locher (eds): Records of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee, 1955-1990. See <<http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/collections/colltopic.cfm?lng=en&id=18126&navinfo=14465>>.

³ Doc. 6.

⁴ The following designations in English and French illustrate the argument over the seating order. According to the English alphabet the designations of the FRG, the GDR and the USA are: German Democratic Republic, Federal Republic of Germany, United States of America. The FRG insisted on the French alphabet and on "Germany" being the key word for its own designation. The intention lay in having the GDR seated between Bonn and Washington: République fédérale d'**Allemagne** (RFA), République démocratique **allemande** (RDA), États-Unis d'**Amérique**.

⁵ Doc. 7.

The MPT were brought to an end in June 1973, paving the way for the CSCE's Stage I in July 1973, when the Foreign Ministers met in Helsinki for several days. Stage I also saw the first meeting between the foreign ministers of both German states.¹ The conversation between Walter Scheel and Otto Winzer on the first day of the Foreign Ministers' meeting is particularly revealing for the dialectics that were characteristic both of the inner-German relationship as well as of the strategic blueprint of Brandt's and Scheel's *Neue Ostpolitik*: Stability and change were the antagonistic key elements. Both ministers viewed the meeting as part of a process of "normalisation". With regard to peacefully cooperating and maintaining peace in Europe – what later became the "*Verantwortungsgemeinschaft*"² – Scheel did not hesitate to speak about "common interests". However, whereas Winzer demanded that contacts between the two German governments should take place between the foreign ministries, Scheel, without directly mentioning Bonn's "*Verklammerungsstrategie*",³ noted the successful establishment of relations between the Chancellery and the GDR's Ministerial Council. Winzer did not want to accept this kind of inner-German special relationship and angrily – and correctly – saw the reason for this special construction in Bonn's efforts "to liquidate the GDR as a socialist state". Scheel could not openly admit this strategy, but he gave a sophisticated justification for Bonn's efforts for overcoming the German division: "Perhaps some day even the GDR would say that the idea of the unity of the nation is stronger than it assumes today. After all, the German nation had survived thousands of years while social systems had changed. We had a clear priority: Above all ranked peace, and the idea of the nation's unity had been pushed behind this. If the policy of maintaining the nation's unity

¹ The negotiations about the inner-German *modus vivendi* – the *Grundlagenvertrag* – were conducted between Egon Bahr and Michael Kohl, as representatives of the West German Chancellery, and the East German Ministerial Council. This construction enabled both sides to sort out the controversial issue of recognition. See *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik*, series VI, vol. II, *Die Bahr-Kohl-Gespräche 1970-1973*, edited by Hanns Juergen Kuesters, Monika Kaiser, Hans-Heinrich Jansen and Daniel Hofmann, Munich 2004.

² With regard to the inner-German relationship, Erich Honecker often referred to the term "*Verantwortungsgemeinschaft*" (common bond of responsibility). Schmidt rather less emotionally spoke about "*gemeinsame Sicherheit*" (common security). See Oliver Bange: "Keeping Détente Alive" – Inner German Relations under Helmut Schmidt and Erich Honecker, 1974-1982, paper presented at the conference "From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975-1985 – The Globalization of Bipolar Confrontation", Artimino, Italy, 27-29 April 2006, due to be published in 2008 in a volume edited by Leopoldo Nuti et al.

³ The term "*Verklammerung*" (embracing or clipping together) was coined by Wolfgang Schollwer (*1922), the FDP's most influential advocate of a new Ostpolitik. In April 1962 Schollwer pleaded for developing a policy of relaxation and for avoiding any deepening of the German division. According to Schollwer, every useful channel of communication between the two German states had to be seized. The similarity to Brandt's and Bahr's Ostpolitik design is obvious. For the FDP's Ostpolitik at the transition from the 1960s to the 1970s, see Gottfried Niedhart: *Friedens- und Interessenwahrung: Zur Ostpolitik der F.D.P. in Opposition und sozialliberaler Regierung 1968-1970*, in: H.G. Fleck, J. Froelich, B.C. Padtberg, H. Scheerer (eds): *Jahrbuch zur Liberalismus-Forschung*, Baden-Baden 1995, pp. 105-126. For the struggles within the FDP about different stratagems with regard to Ostpolitik, see Mathias Siekmeier: *Restauration oder Reform? Die FDP in den sechziger Jahren – Deutschland- und Ostpolitik zwischen Wiedervereinigung und Reform*, Cologne 1998.

was not aggressive, pursuing it could not be evil."¹ The second meeting between Scheel and Winzer, taking place on 7 July 1973, was less controversial. Concerning the foreseeable entry of both German states to the United Nations, they agreed that "one had to take care to avoid any 'querelles allemandes' in the UN, too."²

As the first conversation between Scheel and Winzer indicated, in the long term nothing less than the existence of the GDR as a socialist state was at stake in the CSCE process. With regard to the conference, Bock noticed "we have every reason not to underestimate the activities of the EEC and NATO's states".³ According to Bock, "with their demagogic performance, the Western states are trying to pretend to the public that they 'represent the true interests of the people'. [...] According to the West's assumption, the socialist states have to pay the 'price' of so called 'human relief'⁴ in return for a multilateral recognition of frontiers."⁵ Bock accurately predicted the Helsinki Final Act's character as a tit-for-tat deal in July 1973. In his report to Foreign Minister Winzer, he left no doubt that the NATO and EEC states' proposals concerning the second and third item of the agenda⁶ "are aimed at eroding the sovereignty of the socialist states by means of multilateral agreements and broad 'freedom of movement of persons and ideas'.⁷ Bock's predicted to Winzer that "the NATO states can be expected to try to force their concept on the European Security Conference by all means".⁸ Shortly after the start of the CSCE's Stage II in Geneva in September 1973, Bonn's delegation tabled a paper for a regulation about peaceful change of frontiers. According to Bonn's view, the principles of inviolability of frontiers and of territorial integrity of states were being qualified as subordinate features compared to the non-use of force. The MfAA *Grundsatzabteilung* perceptively analysed Bonn's intention: "In discussing and defining the three principles, the social-democratic doctrine of 'peaceful change' is being placed in the

¹ Doc. 8. For the West German account of this conversation see Akten zur Auswaertigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1973, doc. 215.

² Doc. 9. For the West German account of this conversation see AAPD 1973, doc. 220.

³ Doc. 10.

Furthermore, the SED Politburo – during its session on 12 June – instructed Winzer to prepare a report on Stage I and to submit guidelines to the Politburo for getting a resolution about the GDR's performance in Stage II. SAPMO: DY 30/ J IV 2/2A/1691 and DY 30/ J IV 2/2A/1693. On 17 July 1973 the SED Politburo discussed Winzer's report on Stage I. SAPMO: DY 30/ J IV 2/2A/1698. On 21 August 1973, the Politburo took its decision on the guidelines for the CSCE delegation in Stage II. SAPMO: DY 30/ J IV 2/2A/1715.

⁴ The original German term - "menschliche Erleichterungen" – has no equivalent in English. "Erleichterungen" is the plural of the German word for relief, and is therefore best described as measures in aid against personal hardships (like family reunions, marriages etc.).

⁵ Doc. 10.

⁶ The proposals from NATO and EEC states concerning cooperation in the field of trade, economy, science/technology, and freer movement of people, information and ideas can be found in PA AA: MfAA C 374/78.

⁷ Doc. 11.

⁸ Ibid.

centre, and thereby the functions of the principles aimed at securing and stabilising peace in Europe are being weakened. Hence, in the proposal, the principle of changing frontiers by mutual agreement is being placed next to the principle of inviolability of frontiers."¹ Bonn's social-liberal government did indeed want to get more out of the CSCE compared to the German-Soviet Treaty of 12 August 1970. The Treaty of Moscow was merely about "renunciation of force" and "inviolability of frontiers". It did not contain any reference to "peaceful change of frontiers". In August 1970, West German interests could be safeguarded via maintaining in a unilateral document that the German question was still open and the Moscow Treaty did not contradict the desire for unification.²

In August 1974 Klaus Blech, then deputy head of Bonn's CSCE delegation, told Bock that the FRG "specifically [...] held the view that the ES³ could not be a multilateral sanctification of the treaties with the USSR and other socialist states. It also could not agree to a potential attempt to utilise the results of the [CSCE] conference for stepping back from regulations agreed in the framework of the [FRG's Eastern] treaties."⁴ As the FRG – right from the outset – "had not been interested in letting the ESC become a conference about the 'German problem'",⁵ the Schmidt government asked the United States to negotiate the peaceful change issue with the Soviet Union on its behalf. In December 1974, Blech informed Bock that FRG Chancellor Schmidt "set out the FRG's position about the sentence concerning the mutually agreed change of frontiers both in Moscow and in Washington".⁶ Agreement would have been reached with Kissinger that the USA again take responsibility for this issue in order to reach a settlement with the USSR.

Eventually, the Soviet Union was successful in opposing a direct link between "inviolability of frontiers" and "peaceful change of frontiers" in the same, third principle of the Declaration of Principles. But Moscow did not succeed in dropping the peaceful change clause from the Declaration of Principles altogether. In February 1975, Kissinger and Gromyko reached agreement to include the regulation about peaceful change in the principle of sovereign equality.⁷ This was still a very prominent place for the peaceful change clause. Finally, the Soviet Union had to accept Bonn's peaceful change demand in order to bring its long-term pet

¹ Doc. 12.

² For an English translation of the "Brief zur deutschen Einheit" (Letter on German unification) see the webpage "German History in Documents and Images" of the German Historical Institute: <http://www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/docpage.cfm?docpage_id=1677>. However, this particular translation should be treated with some caution, see footnoted comments in doc. 4.

³ ES here stands for ESC or CSCE.

⁴ Doc. 13.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Doc. 14.

⁷ For a detailed study, see Niedhart: Peaceful Change of Frontiers.

project to a successful end. As had been the case with the shift from Ulbricht to Honecker in the run-up to the Moscow treaty in 1969/1970, the Helsinki Final Act 1975 again proved that Moscow's national interest by far outweighed the GDR's national security concerns. The GDR again had to pay the price. Heading the Warsaw Pact's most Western outpost, Honecker's team remained rightfully concerned that the West used inter-systemic cooperation for "systematically and permanently influencing the economic, political and ideological processes in the countries of the socialist community of states, in order to induce the erosion of their social order".¹

When confronted with the notion that he and his team in Helsinki negotiated the demise of the GDR, and when asked what in retrospect he would have done differently, Siegfried Bock still held firm to the results from Helsinki.² In his view, it was not so much the Helsinki Final Act, but the inability of the GDR to adapt and change, which resulted in its demise.

The perceptions, conclusions and reactions within the GDR towards the proceedings and results of the CSCE were quite diverse. It appears that much of this can be attributed to the position of the actors at the time. The SED's Politburo and the GDR's Ministerial Council – to a lesser extent – were places of high politics, where due respect was paid to Moscow's intentions and the balance of powers and interests within the Warsaw Pact. The details of negotiating in Helsinki and Geneva were left to the professional diplomats of the GDR's foreign ministry (the MfAA). Their perspective is reflected in the documents of this E-Dossier. A further important angle on the proceedings and their eventual outcome and effects on the GDR was that of the East German State Security, or Stasi.

The authors are in no doubt that introducing and analysing only a partial reality – such as that of East German diplomacy in the GDR-CSCE context – is intrinsically problematic. For this reason, two additional E-Dossiers will be dedicated to the decisive *volte face* in East German foreign policy documented here. Both aim to shed further light on the central question of why

¹ Doc. 15.

² Siegfried Bock: The CSCE – an Epoch of Consensus, summary of Bock's remarks given at the Conference "The Roots of the European Security System: Thirty Years since the Helsinki Final Act", organized by the Center for Security Studies at the ETH Zurich as a partner in the Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact (PHP), in cooperation with the National Security Archive at the George Washington University and the Cold War International History Project of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, both in Washington, D.C., and the Machiavelli Center of Cold War Studies in Florence. The conference was convened in Zurich on 7-10 September 2005. For Bock's remarks in Zurich see <<http://www.vip-ev.de/text163.htm>>. See also Siegfried Bock's contributions to the conference "The Road to Helsinki: The early steps of the CSCE", organised by the Machiavelli Center for Cold War Studies (CIMA), Florence, 29-30 September 2003. For the above mentioned context, two statements by Bock in Florence are of particular relevance: audio transcripts <http://www.machiavellcenter.net/csce/audio_files/25_Bock_02.rm> as well as <http://www.machiavellcenter.net/csce/audio_files/67r_Bock_04.rm>. See also Siegfried Bock, Die DDR im KSZE-Prozess. Siegfried Bock in conversation with the authors, 2003-2007.

and when the East German leadership opted for the course that would become the GDR's standard approach to CSCE-related issues until 1989 – a combination of external defense and internal oppression.

The documentation of these future E-Dossiers proves that Stasi analyses anticipated the eventual compromise and outcome of the CSCE as early as 1973 – and indicates the conclusions they drew from this. They aim to show how – not least through this early Stasi contingency planning – that the GDR leadership, and particularly Erich Honecker, believed that avoiding the subversive influence of "social-democratism" was still possible. Even if the CSCE were to open up new channels of interaction and communication between the two Germanies, as Honecker put it to Brezhnev on 18 June 1975, "there had always been the *Staatssicherheit*, and it is still in existence."¹

This misleading notion of a safety net formed an important psychological background for the ultimate decision of GDR's leadership to bow to Moscow's pressure not to stand in the way of a successful conclusion of the conference. The irony of this was that the intensification of domestic surveillance and oppression by the Stasi² decisively contributed to its negative image among East Germans. The State Security and its ever threatening presence dominated the internal perception of the GDR's society – and proved itself to be an important factor for which the reforms of the communist system in 1989 – intended by a majority of the GDR's leftist opposition groups – were unacceptable to the majority of the East Germans.

¹ Conversation between Honecker and Brezhnev, Berlin, 18 June 1975. SAPMO: DY 30/J IV 2/2/1567.

² Between 1969 and 1975 the number of Stasi employees increased tremendously from about 40,000 to about 60,000. See Jens Gieseke with Doris Hubert: *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit – Schild und Schwert der Partei*, Bonn 2000, p. 86.