APPENDIX

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Not a Treaty, but a Declaration of Intentions in Europe

The Document In Helsinki: Confirming 1945 Realities

By FLORA LEWIS

PARIS—Thirty years after the end of World War II, it remains politically impossible for the former belligerents to sign a peace treaty. Half of Germany is an ally of the western part of the wartime alliance; the other half is an ally of the eastern part, the Soviet Union, and of countries that were wartime allies of Nazi Germany: Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria.

So, this week the nations of Europe, plus the United States and Canada but minus Albania, are to sign a document officially called "the final act of the conference on security and cooperation in Europe." Unofficially it has been called an "ersatz peace treaty."

It is going to be signed in solemn pomp by the heads of 35 states as the formal acceptance of changes that the war made on the map of Europe.

From the Soviet point of view, the key phrase in a document that runs more than 100 pages is that frontiers "are inviolable." To the Russians that means the official endorsement of the partition of Germany; the shift of Poland westward, with the Soviet Union absorbing the eastern part and Poland taking former parts of Germany; the Soviet absorption of the formerly independent Baltic states; Soviet acquisition of formerly Czechoslovak Ruthenia and formerly Rumanian Bessarabia; Rumanian acquisition of formerly Hungarian Transylvania; and other lesser border changes.

But the document also provides that borders can be changed by "peaceful agreement." To West Germany and its allies that leaves open the dream of German reunification.

In its tongue-twisting clauses and tedious procession of whereases, the document does reflect what has and has not happened in Europe since World War II.

The main thing that has not happened is there has been no war. Neither has there been any retreat. The armistice line where Soviet and Western troops met in conquest of Germany has been congealed into a border. For some years, it was an impenetrable iron curtain. Now, it is more like a steel net; some things can go through but the line is as clearly marked and formidable as ever.

The main thing that has happened, apart from the formation of blocs on both sides of that line, is an evolution of attitudes and ways of life.

In the West, the formation of the Common Market has drawn former enemies together in economic, social, and, they hope, eventually political cooperation. After a millennium of mutual devastation, war among the countries on the western cape of the Euro-Asian continent is unthinkable. Their union in a single confederal structure hasn't yet happened but is an avowed goal.

In the East, the taut Stalinist monolith has broken down a little. Rumania remains rigidly Communist but barely pays lip service to Moscow's tutelage. Hungary pays lip service but runs its domestic affairs with a degree of nonpolitical liberality, not greatly different from the hopes of the Hungarian rebels of 1956. Poland is devoted to producing and consuming. Ideology, though still beyond challenge, reigns at a distance.

In return for the confirmation of Europe's postwar political geography, the Soviet aim, there is a long list of promises in the Helsinki document intended to reduce the practical and human impact of Europe's division, the Western aim.

A Fear of Relaxation

There is widespread concern among Western officials that public opinion in their countries will be bamboozled by what happened. A public information effort is being mounted—formal statements by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, by the Common Market, and individually by each government—to counter what is expected to be a Communist program trumpeting the end of the cold war.

The fear is that people in the West will say: "It's all settled now, nothing more to worry about. So why go on paying for armies and defense to keep the Russians on their side of the line?" Meanwhile, the Warsaw Pact's plans will be made without reference to public opinion.

It probably isn't quite that simple for the Communist powers. There now are serious differences among Communist parties, impossible in Stalin's day, and Moscow has no easy time keeping its clients in line.

On the timetable of the Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev, the Helsinki conference was supposed to be followed by a meeting of European Communist parties. It is dubious whether Mr. Brezhnev, can achieve this. The positions of the Italian, Spanish, Yugoslav and Rumanian parties are so different from those of the other Moscow-oriented parties that they have failed three times in the last year on agreeing even how to launch the conference.

The Western leaders insist that the security document is important; they would look like utter fools to sign it otherwise. But only time and Communist behavior will show what it really means.

The security conference is to be reconvened in June, 1977, for a joint assessment of whether the promises of nonintervention, more human freedoms and better contacts have really been carried out. In the meantime, the Western leaders hope their populations will be wary about assertions that the great day of peace and friendship has arrived.

As always in history, unforeseen events such as those in Portugal, and individuals, such as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, will probably have more influence on reactions than the leaders' hopes.

One thing that emerged clearly from the European security Conference, though it is blurred in the document, is that the East-West rivalry remains intense.

The West has recovered from the destruction of the war, gone on to a flaming prosperity undreamed of a generation earlier, and has entered a period of economic crisis. Reports from Moscow indicate that officials there feel this means the long-heralded collapse of capitalism is imminent.

The East has also recovered and advanced its economy dramatically, though still far behind the West even in recession. It has had to make changes to do this, seeking financial and technological aid from the West which Stalin rejected, but the basic structures remain the same.

Politically, the West has moved somewhat to the left, adding to its systems of social welfare and state involvement in enterprise, either directly or indirectly.

The East has relaxed some of its worst constraints, such as slave labor camps, and eased its fierce isolation. But the "convergence" of the two systems so long predicted has not taken place. The attempts to move in that direction, in Poland, in Hungary, then Czechoslovakia's brief effort at "socialism with a human face," were forcefully aborted.

And despite economic and social exchanges and reduction of political tensions, militarily East and West remain in contention. The main change since the war is that the Soviet Union has become a nuclear super-power and a global naval power. The West is holding up its own, but it can no longer dominate.

Europe has changed in the 30 years since the war, and so has the rest of the world, much of it formerly European empires. But the act of Helsinki is a ratification of where the armies stopped in 1945. That fact has not changed.

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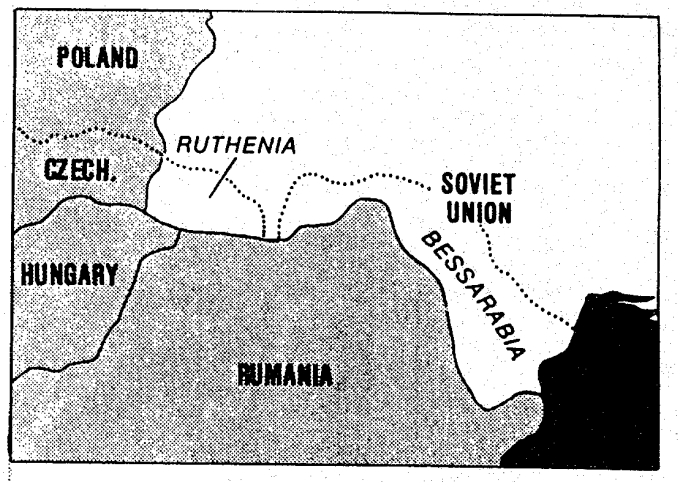

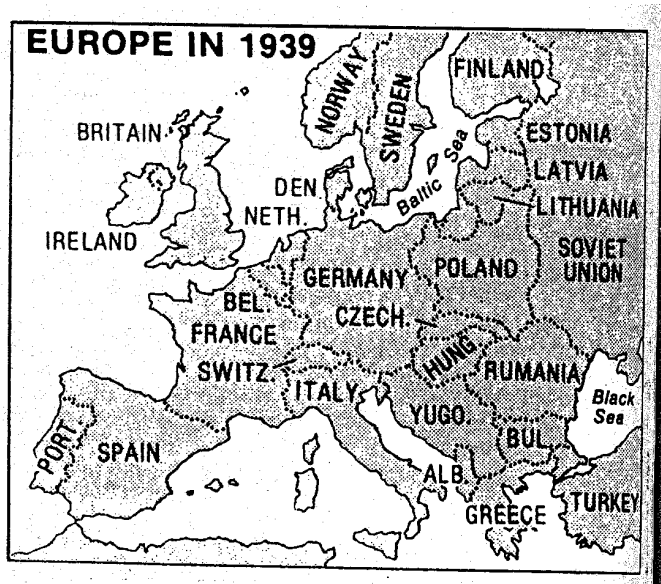
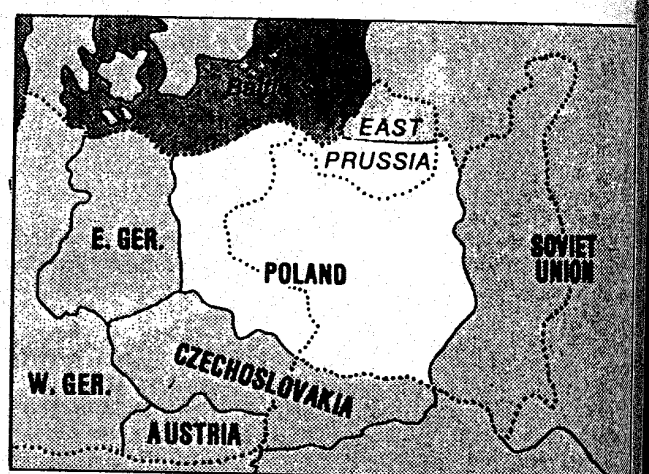
This week in Helsinki leaders of 35 nations will sign an agreement that some have called "an ersatz treaty" confirming changes in European boundaries since World War II. Principal changes (maps below) include Poland's shift westward; the Soviet Union's annexation of Bessarabia from Rumania and Ruthenia from Czechoslovakia and the Soviet absorption of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and part of East Prussia. Another effect concerns the partition of Germany into eastern and western halves. But a section in the Helsinki document says borders can be changed "by peaceful agreement." To the Germans that keeps alive the hope of eventual reunion.