

LaRouche case a test for CSCE

by Poul Rasmussen

When the foreign ministers of 35 European and North American nations arrived on June 5 at the Bella Center in Copenhagen for the opening of a conference on the Human Dimension held by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), they received an unexpected welcome. Up in the sky, two bright red helium balloons carried a huge banner reading "Free Lyndon LaRouche, political prisoner of the United States," next to a photo of LaRouche.

The May 31-June 3 Washington summit meeting between Presidents George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachov only two days earlier made this welcome an appropriate reminder to the foreign ministers not to forget the original purpose of the Copenhagen meeting: to further the development of human rights in the signatory nations to the CSCE's Helsinki Final Act of 1975.

Soviets want new Congress of Vienna

The Soviet proposal in Washington for the establishment of a permanent secretariat of the CSCE as a League of Nations-type replacement of the Warsaw Pact and the Atlantic Alliance in Europe, created a palpable euphoria at the opening session in Copenhagen. The attention was totally focused on the talks between U.S. Secretary of State James Baker III and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. The corridors of the conference were buzzing with excitement. The hundreds of bureaucrats and delegates from 35 nations gathered at the 500-foot-long conference table had trouble hiding their great expectations: "Are we going to become more important?" "Will we be the new administrators of Europe?" Only the sterile cement walls of the modern Bella Center destroyed the illusion that this was 1815, at the Congress of Vienna.

Despite the euphoria surrounding the opening session, Danish Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen to a large extent stayed with the original theme of the conference in his opening speech. Ellemann-Jensen pointed to the dramatic developments in Eastern Europe as a positive movement toward new democracies.

But, in full coherence with the program of the conference, he stressed that a free nation is more than just democracy. "The concept of democracy based upon free elections and free and fair competition among political parties and organizations is an indispensable element of such a system.

It is equally important to ensure for our citizens the basic guarantees of the rule of law. This applies in particular to criminal proceedings," he declared.

A week earlier at a press conference, Ellemann-Jensen emphasized that the CSCE process also includes having countries "check up on each other." In other words, how does each nation live up to the principles of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, which established CSCE as an ongoing process? This often touches upon areas that many countries normally would regard as their "internal affairs," Ellemann-Jensen said. Therefore, it cannot be helped, if some countries feel offended if specific problems regarding human rights in their country are brought up, he said.

During the first week of the conference, it was repeated by many delegations that the input from the so-called Non-Governmental Organizations—private groups with United Nations recognition and offices, something like lobbyists—plays a crucial role. Therefore, a number of meetings and events by "parallel activities" was scheduled at various locations around Copenhagen for the duration of the conference, which ends on June 29.

Ramsey Clark to address 'LaRouche case'

One such parallel activity is the scheduled June 19 meeting sponsored by the International Commission to Investigate Human Rights Violations, where former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, the leader of Lyndon LaRouche's defense team, will speak. In addition, Lewis du Pont Smith—whose wealthy family had a court declare him mentally incompetent and deprive him of his civil rights because he supports Lyndon LaRouche's politics—is expected to present his case to the CSCE conference attendees.

Observers on the scene have stated that the LaRouche case is a true test of the sincerity of the CSCE Helsinki Accords' human rights provisions. If fear of retaliation from the United States prevents smaller countries from addressing the LaRouche case, CSCE cannot be the instrument of defense against human rights violations it is thought to be. Unfortunately, after only a few days of meetings, representatives of the International Commission to Investigate Human Rights Violations report that some delegations indeed have expressed fears of U.S. pressure.

Another test of the CSCE conference's seriousness has been the question of the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Here the CSCE has already failed. On the first day of the conference, the three governments of these countries, which were annexed by the Soviets under the Hitler-Stalin Pact's secret protocols, collectively applied for observer status, which had been given to Albania only a few days earlier. As expected, the application was denied, because the Soviets vetoed it. Unfortunately, support from the Western nations was limited to inviting the three foreign ministers to present their case at a press conference at the Bella Center.