

The plan covered nine countries in Central Europe — Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, East Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland and West Germany. However, it recommended that negotiations on disarmament in Europe proceed on three territorial levels — the zone of direct contact between the two alliances, Central Europe and the Atlantic-to-Urals region.

The verification regime proposed in the Plan did not differ substantively from that found in the "Budapest Appeal." These measures included: international control commission(s) with NATO, WTO and /or third party participation; information exchanges; notification and observation of the start and completion of withdrawals; exit points for withdrawing forces, and control points at major railway junctions, airfields and ports.

No comprehensive reductions proposals were publicly offered in the next 18 months as both alliances focused their efforts on the mandate talks in Vienna.¹⁶ The discussions were more protracted than many had anticipated. Inter- and intra-alliance divisions on issues such as the inclusion of tactical nuclear weapons and air forces, the handling of dual-capable systems, the relationship of the negotiations to the CSCE, and the geographic definition of the reductions areas and sub-areas, were not easily overcome. Finally, however, consensus was reached on the mandate,¹⁷ and it was included as an Annex to the Concluding Document of the Vienna follow-up meeting of the CSCE, published 17 January 1989.

As stated in the CFE mandate, the objectives were threefold:

...to strengthen stability and security in Europe through the establishment of a stable and secure balance of conventional armed forces, which include conventional armaments and equipment, at lower levels; the elimination of disparities prejudicial to stability and security; and the elimination, as a matter of priority, of the capability for launching surprise attack and for initiating large-scale offensive action.¹⁸

These objectives were to be achieved by means of militarily significant measures, such as reductions, limitations, redeployments, etc., applied to the whole area, with provision for regional differentiation. The process itself would proceed in a step-by-step manner, ensuring that the participants' security was not adversely affected at any stage. In terms of the scope and area of application, the mandate included the region from the Atlantic to the Urals. Dual-capable equipment was not excluded nor was it to be dealt with separately. Naval forces and chemical weapons, however, would not be discussed.

While the negotiations would take place within the framework of the CSCE, only the participants themselves would determine the procedures and results of the talks, or effect changes in the mandate. Information and views were to be exchanged with other countries within the CSCE.