

Arms Control in Reality

The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe came into effect July 17, 1992, after two years of member state ratification. Its original goal was the achievement of a stable balance of conventional forces between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, lowering the levels of these forces, and the elimination of the capability of states to launch surprise attacks on its neighbours.⁵⁴ The regime was to do this originally by limiting both the number of conventional weapons⁵⁵ each signatory could hold, and by restricting their geographical location, where as one moved towards the centre of Europe, the concentration of weapons would decline.⁵⁶ Decreased weapons levels combined with reduced geographic concentrations would help mitigate significantly the European security dilemma. The tools provided by the CFE Treaty to complete these tasks revolved around the transparency of state weapons holdings. On-site inspections by other states and information sharing were the keys to the smooth functioning of the CFE regime, and further the mitigation of the European security dilemma.

The 1996 CFE Review made minor modifications to the treaty, especially with regards to the geographical positioning of Russian troops within the 'flank zones'.⁵⁷ Partially due to American pressure, the concerns Russia had over the issue of flanks (it thought the policy unfair because it limited the ability of Russia to place Treaty Limited Equipment (TLE) in its own territory, to deal with national security concerns) were resolved by changing the structure of the flanks (making them smaller) and increasing the TLE limits for Russia within these flanks.

The 1999 Adaptation Agreement made two significant modifications to the CFE. First, instead of bloc-to-bloc TLE limitations, changes in the regional security environment (the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the imminent enlargement of NATO) moved the new CFE towards controlling national TLE limits. Secondly, rather than using 'concentric circles' to control TLEs, the Adapted CFE will limit the total number of conventional weapons territorially. The new Treaty also dealt with the issue of Temporary Deployments (TDs), allowing for excess TLEs in the event of 'exceptional circumstances', and there were also measures to increase transparency and information sharing, and an accession procedure for new states. The issue of flank zones, while not specifically mentioned in the Adapted Treaty itself, was carried over. The 2001 review process reinforced the need to increase compliance with TLE levels (referring to Russian non-compliance with flank agreements and TLE levels outside Russian territory), and pushed for member state ratification of the 1999 Adaptation Agreement.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Jeffrey D. McCausland, "NATO and Russian Approaches to 'Adapting' the CFE Treaty," *Arms Control Today* (August 1997), p. 12.

⁵⁵ The CFE Treaty outlines 5 types of Treaty Limited Equipment (TLEs) – Attack Tanks, Armored Vehicles, Artillery Pieces, Attack Helicopters and Attack Aircraft.

⁵⁶ Referred to in the original 1990 Treaty as 'concentric circles', where the innermost of the four circles had the smallest limits, the outermost incorporating the entire CFE area. Dorn Crawford refers to this as "nesting", where "beginning with the central European countries...each successive zone subsumes all the preceding zone plus adjacent states and military districts." Dorn Crawford, *Conventional Armed Forces in Europe: A Review and Update of Key Treaty Elements*, US Department of State, Arms Control Bureau, Washington DC, January 2003.

⁵⁷ Referring to the Northern and Southern 'Flanks' of Europe, the CFE attempted to alleviate fears of attack from the flanks by limiting the number of forces that Russia and other states could concentrate in these areas.

⁵⁸ *Formal Conclusions of the Second Conference to Review the Operations of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Concluding Act of the Negotiation on Personnel Strength*, http://www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1999/cfe/cfetr_2revconfe.htm, February 2003.