

Arms Control Treaties in Theory

For Hedley Bull, arms control agreements are defined broadly as policies adopted among states which attempt to regulate, limit or eliminate existing arsenals and prevent new ones, through either tacit or formal agreements, in order to reduce the incidence of interstate conflict.⁴⁹ Harald Müller, in a more contemporary evaluation, argues that arms control agreements fulfill four key functions: constructing barriers against arms races degenerating into major violence; securing regional stability; banning dangers for global stability, ecological safety, and ensuring the survival of human life on earth; and creating a sense of irreversibility in current friendly relations.⁵⁰ Accordingly, Müller argues that for an arms control treaty to be successful, it needs treaty community coherence, leadership, and great power cooperation.⁵¹

Schofield argues that arms control treaties are important because they either reduce the likelihood of war or because they reduce the costs of deterring it.⁵² Schofield adds that for arms control agreements to be successful in these tasks, they must have characteristics that, among other things, allow for flexibility, reduce uncertainty, enhance cooperation without robbing states of their ability to defend themselves, not disadvantaging one signatory over the other, enforce compliance, punish cheating, aim at achieving feasible goals, and control for third party threats.⁵³

In this paper we will evaluate the CFE using two broad criteria, which are in part derived from the above approaches. *Community* refers to the ability of an arms control regime to be flexible, based on compromise, but at the same time enforcing rules-based behaviour within the treaty area. Internal cohesion around the idea of community action is necessary for the long-term viability of an arms control regime. *Adaptability* refers to how well an arms control treaty can react to events affecting the treaty area, such as shifts in regional security conditions. Adaptability is important for maintaining the future relevancy of the treaty, as, especially in Europe, regional security conditions change rapidly. In order to evaluate an arms control treaty, then, we will examine internal relations within the treaty area and reactions of the treaty area to changing security conditions. The next two sections of this paper will detail the evolution of the CFE, and then use *community* and *adaptability* to evaluate the CFE's ability to mitigate the security dilemma in Europe, its present capacities to respond to changing security environments on the continent and on its periphery, and as such its long-term viability.

⁴⁹ Hedley Bull, *The Control of the Arms Race: Disarmament and Arms Control in the Missile Age*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961, as interpreted by Schofield, 2000, p. 748.

⁵⁰ Müller, 2000, p. 78.

⁵¹ Müller, 2000, p. 79-80. Community coherence refers to a common core of shared objectives among the parties, leadership refers to a state that, while legally equal to other treaty members, leads the treaty community in the difficult situations emerging from compliance problems, and great power cooperation refers to a commonality of interest and commitment among the major powers to the treaty and compliance.

⁵² Schofield, 2000, p. 749.

⁵³ Schofield, 2000.