

## Introduction

A security dilemma in international relations refers to a situation where sovereign states, in the context of an anarchic international system, will arm themselves for fear of being dominated by their neighbours.<sup>46</sup> This security dilemma can be overcome. But the options for overcoming it can lead to two divergent outcomes – peace or conflict. First, you can overcome this dilemma by balancing the power of your neighbours – evening the distribution of power among states by arming. On its own, this balancing can have both positive and negative effects on peace and stability in the international system. Unregulated, it can lead to long periods of peace. The ‘long peace’ of the 1800s and the Cold War period from 1945-1989 are good examples. It can also lead to devastating regional and international conflict. The outbreak of World War One, and subsequently World War Two, highlight this problem. Unregulated balancing is unpredictable, and as such unstable.

A security dilemma can also be overcome by balancing power through international and regional cooperation, especially through arms control. This option should, theoretically, lead to better chances of peace. The 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), and its subsequent adaptation, has been a successful example of a rules based balance of power mitigating a security dilemma. The use of an international arms control regime (generally understood as a set of principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures<sup>47</sup>) can help significantly mitigate the security dilemma by providing both an institutionalized forum for discussion and decision-making, and by providing relatively unbiased information to the participants, removing that measure of uncertainty and unpredictability that traditionally taints relations between states. Taken in this light, the CFE has played an important role in ensuring stability in Europe after the Cold War, acting as its “cornerstone”.

This paper will evaluate the CFE and its ability to mitigate the European security dilemma. Three broad questions must be answered in order to do this:

- Has the security dilemma in Europe been resolved by the original CFE Treaty as negotiated in 1990, in the review process of 1996, in the adaptation process of 1999, and in the 2001 review process?
- If the CFE has solved the security dilemma, does this mean that the treaty has lost relevance for European security?
- If the CFE has not resolved the security dilemma, does it have the resources and the institutional capacity to continue towards this goal?

We will answer these questions by examining the level of *community* and the *adaptability* of the CFE, two terms developed using the criteria for evaluating arms control regimes elaborated by Müller and Schofield.<sup>48</sup> As such, we will measure the CFE against broader understandings of arms control treaties. The paper will conclude by examining the importance of the CFE for Canada.

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<sup>46</sup> Glenn H. Snyder, “‘Prisoner’s Dilemma’ and ‘Chicken’ Models in International Politics.” *International Studies Quarterly* (March 1971), 66-103; Robert Gervis, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* (January 1978), 167-214.

<sup>47</sup> Stephen Krasner, *International Regimes*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983.

<sup>48</sup> Harald Müller, “Compliance Politics: A Critical Analysis of Multilateral Arms Control Treaty Enforcement,” *The Nonproliferation Review*, Summer 2000; Julian Schofield, “Arms Control Failure and the Balance of Power,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, December 2000.