
Preface

The Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty signed on 19 November 1990 calls on the parties to continue negotiations with the goal of building upon that disarmament agreement. These on-going negotiations — often called the CFE 1A negotiations — has as one agenda item: "measures to limit the personnel strength" of conventional armed forces within the Atlantic-to-the-Urals (ATTU) zone. The CFE 1A talks aim to reach agreement before the Helsinki Follow-up Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) slated for the spring of 1992.

Verifying limitations on military personnel, whether in the CFE or other contexts, will not be easy and will likely involve its own unique characteristics. Unlike much of the military equipment (such as missiles and tanks), which to-date have been the focus of arms control and disarmament efforts, personnel seems, at first glance, less susceptible to traditional verification methods. This is true because military personnel are much harder to count with any precision, especially from a distance. There may also be significant definitional problems because of differences in force structures between nations, particularly the greater reliance by some countries on reserve and paramilitary forces.

It can also be argued that military personnel constitutes a threat only when combined with modern equipment. Consequently, it might be sufficient to focus verification efforts only on those personnel directly associated with such equipment. If so, then the verification of personnel limitations might rely extensively on the provisions already set up to verify treaty limited equipment (TLE) under the CFE Treaty.

Verification systems based on tags, identity cards or other individual tracking methods are also feasible but may be expensive, administratively cumbersome, time consuming and not foolproof. Administrative, personnel and other records may provide an additional source of useful information on personnel levels, but again with similar caveats.

In part because of the difficulties foreseen in verifying personnel limitations, it is sometimes argued that such limitations should take the form of politically binding rather than legally binding obligations. According to this view, politically binding obligations do not require the same standard of verification as do legally binding ones. Under the Stockholm Document of 1986, for example, the politically binding Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM) incorporated therein did not require the same stringency of verification as do the obligations of the CFE Treaty with the latter's focus on reducing military