

Level Task Force (HLTF) as a steering body for the review and development of Western positions on conventional arms control.

Second, in September 1986, the first stage of the CCSBMDE concluded with an agreement signed in Stockholm. There was hope that the success of these talks in creating a more open and predictable security regime in Europe would carry over to the MBFR negotiations.

Third, the signing of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), in December 1987, signalled a new sense of optimism about European arms control in general.

In December 1986, the North Atlantic Council issued the Brussels Declaration on Conventional Arms Control. It recommended two distinct negotiations: one, to expand upon the results of the Stockholm Conference on confidence and security-building measures; and the second, to establish conventional stability at lower levels from the Atlantic to the Urals. The former would be for all CSCE participants while the latter would be restricted to the nations of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

In February 1987 the Conventional Mandate Talks between the Warsaw Pact and NATO began with the aim of drafting a mandate for new negotiations on conventional stability in Europe. At the time, these negotiations were referred to as the Conventional Stability Talks (CST). On 10 January 1989, agreement was reached on the mandate for the new talks, at which point their formal title became Negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE).

The mandate stated the following as the objectives of the talks:

...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.

It stated that these objectives would be achieved through such militarily significant measures as reductions, limitations, redeployment provisions and equal ceilings. Measures would be pursued step by step and for the whole area of application, from the Atlantic to the Urals, allowing for regional differentiation to redress disparities, if necessary.¹

Following the decision to open the first round of the new negotiations in March, the participants decided to conclude the MBFR talks. On 2 February 1989, the forty-seventh and final round of the latter ended without agreement.

Prior to the agreement on the CFE mandate, a series of significant events established the groundwork upon which the talks began. On 25 November 1989, NATO released a report entitled *Conventional Forces in Europe: The Facts*. The document

¹ United States, Department of State, "To Strengthen Stability and Security": CFE Negotiation on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Washington: United States Information Agency (March 1989), pp. 4-5.