

3. Conventional Armed Forces in Europe

In a declaration issued on the day the Treaty was signed, Germany reaffirmed its commitment to reduce its armed forces levels to 370,000. These reductions will begin once the Treaty enters into force. In a separate declaration, all of the signatories to the Treaty agree that they will not increase their peacetime authorized conventional personnel strength until the CFE 1A negotiations on the issue have been completed.

One day prior to the signing of the Treaty, the Soviet Union announced a ten-year draft plan for reductions and restructuring in Soviet armed forces, the first stage of which will involve a complete withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mongolia and Germany by 1994.

Soon after the signing of the Treaty, NATO countries expressed concern about Soviet movements of large numbers of tanks and artillery out of the European zone, and therefore outside the limits of the Treaty, prior to its signing. Questions have also been raised about the validity of the data supplied by the Soviet Union in the first information exchange. In response, the Soviet Union explained that in a number of cases, the movement of equipment beyond the Ural mountains was related to unilateral Soviet reductions announced in December 1988 and still being implemented. Some of the equipment that has been moved has already been destroyed. The Soviet Union invited US experts to come to the Soviet Union to discuss this question. On the question of data, the figures supplied by the Soviet Union were much lower in some categories than had been expected by the US. Under the terms of the Treaty, there is a ninety-day grace period in which states may correct the information they submitted in the initial information exchange.

In March, a second issue became of considerable concern. The Soviet Union re-categorized three motorized rifle divisions, previously under the jurisdiction of the army, as naval "coastal defence" units and claimed that the equipment associated with these units was not limited by the Treaty. Similarly, the Soviet Union claimed that equipment held by the Strategic Rocket Forces was not subject to the terms of the Treaty. This indicated a fundamental difference in interpretation of the Treaty's terms between the Soviet Union and the other signatories. The problem prompted President Bush to send a letter to Gorbachev in an effort to find a compromise which maintained the terms of the Treaty. The question of interpretation was of such significance that it put all other arms control negotiations, especially the strategic arms negotiations on hold. After considerable high-level diplomacy throughout the month of May, US Secretary of State Baker and Soviet Foreign Secretary Bessmertnykh reached a compromise agreement on 1 June 1991.

On 14 June, in an extraordinary meeting of the Treaty signatories in Vienna, the compromise was made formal and official. In a binding statement in which the Soviet Union pledged its full compliance with the Treaty's terms, the Soviet Union also agreed to destroy or convert 14,500 of the