

7. NEGOTIATIONS ON CONVENTIONAL ARMED FORCES IN EUROPE (CFE)

BACKGROUND

Negotiations between members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact on reducing conventional armed forces in Europe have been conducted in two main fora: the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks in Vienna; and the Negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) in Vienna.

The MBFR talks began in 1973. The aim of the talks was to reduce the level of conventional forces in a Central European zone covering the territories of West Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Direct participants included the eleven NATO and Warsaw Pact nations with troops stationed in these countries--the above seven, plus the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union. Eight nations, known as "flank states", were indirect participants in the talks. These consisted of Denmark, Greece, Norway, Italy, and Turkey from NATO; and Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania from the Warsaw Pact.

The MBFR talks showed some progress through the 1970s, including an agreement in principle in 1977 to reduce each side's forces in the region to 900,000 air and ground personnel with a 700,000 sub-ceiling for ground forces alone. Between 1977 and the conclusion of the talks on 2 February 1989, however, the talks were stalemated largely over the issues of the number of troops each side had stationed in the area and the methods that would be used for verifying any troop reductions.

Throughout the negotiations, NATO's positions centred on achieving parity with the Warsaw Pact in military manpower; agreeing on effective verification measures to ensure Treaty compliance; allowing for geographical asymmetries, given the greater distance to the central front from North America and the UK; and requiring collectivity in force reductions--enabling deployments of troops from one nation to substitute for those of another while remaining under the overall manpower ceiling. The Warsaw Pact, on the other hand, opposed collectivity and pushed for national sub-ceilings on force levels; equipment, in addition to manpower, reductions; and verification measures less intrusive than those proposed by the West.

A long-standing dispute in the negotiations raged over the size of existing force levels, with the West counting 230,000 more Warsaw Pact troops than officially declared by the East.

The political atmosphere surrounding the talks has changed in recent years for a number of reasons. First, in April 1986, General Secretary Gorbachev proposed to expand the "zone of reductions" to the "entire territory of Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals." Subsequently, in June 1986, the Warsaw Pact suggested troop cuts of 100,000 to 150,000 over the next two years, with ultimate reductions of 500,000 on each side by the early 1990s. The Soviets suggested that negotiations on these proposals could take place in an expanded MBFR forum (including countries not already involved), a forum related to the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (CCSBMDE) (see Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, Chapter 6 of *The Guide*), or a new forum altogether. In May 1986, NATO formed a High