

The nature of the arms control measures were the result of the end of the Cold War and how it ended. The weakness and ultimate fall of the Soviet Union allowed the United States to obtain arms control agreements and associated verification measures, especially on site-verification, on the kind of favourable terms it had been seeking since 1945. This reinforced the idea that arms control and its methods of verification, are closely connected to, are a reflection of, the existing power relationships. The CFE Treaty and the START agreements, and the nature of the verification measures associated with them were seen, not without a certain justification, as the result of the West's "victory" in the Cold War.

This is not to argue that the CFE and START treaties were simply imposed upon a reluctant Soviet Union and now Russia in the way the Versailles Treaty of 1919 and the unconditional surrender of 1945 were forced upon a defeated Germany. These were mutually sought-after and beneficial agreements, as all successful arms control agreements must be. By the mid-1980s it was becoming clear that Moscow was interested in concluding arms control arrangements so that it could address important domestic matters. The Soviet willingness to consider more far-reaching agreements back-up by more intrusive verification measures, also undermined resistance to arms control within parts of the U.S. government and bolstered the views of American allies such as Canada that greater flexibility was possible without compromising Western collective defence. The fact that Russia has now ratified START II and continues to hold to the CFE, and appears willing to continue the arms control process, indicates that we have entered an era in which a new, broader consensus exists on what is possible and desirable.

For the West this consensus is important. Having obtained the kind of agreements that were made possible by the end of the Cold War, it also has stake in seeing them succeed for the sake of its own security interests. To be sure, the agreements represent both a desire to ease tensions with Russia and a latent, if not always openly stated, fear of a revival of animosity between East and West. It is because of the very difficulty and delicacy of the situation that arms control has become integral to allied security and its hopes for stability in Europe. The last thing NATO needs now, especially in light of its expansion eastward and Partnership for Peace (PfP) program is the uncertainty that would be brought out by a weakening of conventional and nuclear arms control measures arrived at during the last ten years. This mutuality of interests reinforces the reductions of the global threat that began in the early 1990s and holds out the promise that the Cold War will not soon return. In this sense arms control has both encouraged further stability even as it is a product of it.

In considering the history of arms control during the Cold War and its relevance to the RMA a number of considerations need to be kept in mind. First, these are "conventional weapons" and thus unlike the nuclear arsenals of the Cold War they do not fit into the usability paradoxes of nuclear weapons. They are being developed and deployed primarily on the expectation that they will be used and not as much on the basis of calculations about deterrence, mutual or otherwise. They are to be used in crisis rather than tempt fate by not acting. In this regard, they cannot be equated with the large conventional forces which NATO and the Warsaw Pact maintained during the Cold War and which were reduced under the CFE Treaty. These forces were developed to complement the