CHAPTER IV
CONVENTIONAL FORCE REDUCTION IN EUROPE (CFE) TREATY

The Conventional Force Reduction Treaty signed at the Paris Summit meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe on 19 November, 1990\(^1\) ended the East-West military confrontation paving the way for an unprecedented arms-control agreement in the history of disarmament. Concluded in less than two years among 22 NATO and WARSAW States, in the midst of breath-taking political changes in Eastern Europe is the most extra-ordinary and stunning event. All initial problems over the interpretation of the treaty were resolved by the U.S. Secretary of State, James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh in Lisbon on 1 June, 1991.\(^2\) It was later approved by the signatories on 14 June in Vienna.\(^3\)

The relevance of the Conventional Force Reduction in Europe (CFE) Treaty is being questioned in the wake of the voluntary dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, turmoil in East European countries\(^4\) weakening the Soviet empire after coup (resulting in the disintegration of the Soviet Union), ceasing of its military activities\(^5\) and emergence of U.S. as an undisputed leader. On

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3. Ibid p. 22.

4. Facing ethnic civil wars at home and uncertainty at home.

the other hand, it has been argued that the present international scenario may generate uncertainty, insecurity and instability resulting in amassing of conventional weapons, thereby enhancing CFE's role as a watch-dog monitoring and regulating the military activities. It is further strengthened because of its uniqueness, isolating it from the previous agreements.

First, the previous agreements involved only limited space, i.e. Central Europe. But now it covers the whole of Europe from the Atlantic to the Ural mountains. Secondly in the past only limited parties concluded agreements but this treaty had 22 signatories, all 22 are NATO and Warsaw Pact Countries. Thirdly from the very beginning of the CFE the focus was on the equipment as opposed to the personnel limitation.

The Vienna talks on mutual reductions of armed forces and armaments (MBFR) in Central Europe lasted for 15 years. Nevertheless these negotiations produced ideas on verification which were helpful for the 1989 Vienna Conference.

The negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe began on 6 March, 1989, among 7 WTO States and the 16 NATO States within the framework of the 35 State Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.  

The participating States agreed on three objectives:

- to establish a stable and secure balance of lower-level conventional armed forces
- the elimination of the capability for launching a surprise attack
- the elimination of the capability to launch large-scale offensive operations

These were realised through 'parity in five equipments', 'regional differentiation' i.e. ceiling on four concentric region, permanent storage sites and 'sufficiency rule' respectively (which are discussed at length later in the chapter).

The participants decided that nuclear weapons would not be a subject of CFE and also that naval and chemical weapons will not be addressed in order to reduce the area of disagreement.

The ultimate objective was a situation in which the States of NATO and Warsaw Treaty would retain forces that should be sufficient for defense but incapable of launching surprise attacks or offensive operations. It was hoped that some of the objectives would be fulfilled.

The negotiators started on a hopeful note because of the positive developments like:-


- vastly improved relations of East and West
- end of division of Europe
- replacement of confrontation by co-operation
- unification of Germany
- ending of Cold-War
- and above all for the first time since Korean War, major arms reduction were put on the agenda by the US, Europe and the Soviet Union.

For all this the credit should go to Mikhail Gorbachev who after assuming power in 1985, not only rejected the Brezhnev doctrine of Soviet military intervention in Eastern Europe, confrontational and expansionist policy, but also shook the world with the most astounding radical outlook and policies. Bold initiatives like unilateral Forces cuts in the Soviet Union and East Europe, were announced by Gorbachev in the United Nations in 1988 10 i.e. to cut within two years Soviet armed forces by 500,000 personnel; 8500 artillery pieces; 800 aircraft and 10,000 tanks in East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the Western USSR. He added that 50,000 troops would be withdrawn within the same period. Prior to this other programmes were launched like "Budapest Appeal of June, 1986" 11 followed by a detailed programme in 1987 12 frequent summits (Geneva, Reykjavik,


12. Ibid.
Washington, Moscow, Malta) with the U.S. President and publication of Soviet military budget. These were beyond the wildest imagination of the West. Although there had been agreements in the past like Quadripartite Agreement of 1971 on Berlin to ease East-West relations yet there had never been so much enthusiasm for peace in the history of humanity.

Before declaring the unilaterals cuts, Gorbachev reminded the world about his arms cut proposal of 15 January, 1986 which in turn figures at the Budapest meeting of the political consultative committee of the Warsaw Treaty and followed up later at the meeting in Berlin in May, 1987.

It had called for substantial reductions of the ground and tactical air forces including their armaments stationed in Europe as a whole from the Atlantic ocean to the Urals. NATO and Warsaw were asked to take lead by cutting their strength by 100,000 to 150,000 men within one or two years. It meant reduction by 25 percent by both alliances by 1990. It also suggested the necessity of "reliable and effective verification through national technical means and national procedures including on site inspection". Accompained by this was a proposal of


establishing "international consultative committee" consisting of representatives of NATO, WARSAW and neutral countries, which would monitor the military activities by setting up control posts of railway junctions, airports and ports, etc.  

Emphasising his willingness for disarmament Gorbachev said that the Soviet leadership believed "not only in words but in actions" and in "the principle of excessive arms stockpiling" giving way to the "principle of reasonable sufficiency for defense". 

The unilateral proposal for the reduction of the armed forces and armaments in Europe were to take place in 3 stages:

1. All the revealed imbalances and asymmetries between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty, both in the numerical strength of the armed forces and in main armaments would be eliminated. This approach would be applicable to the continent of Europe as a whole and also its separate regions like Central Europe, Southern Europe, etc. To reveal the imbalances, it was proposed to exchange the initial date and using on site inspection. 

2. The troops of NATO and the WARSAW Treaty would be reduced by another 500,000 on each side. The reductions would be conducted by disbanding army units with simultaneous elimination of their armaments. 

3. Reduction would continue so as to render the army units of both military alliances totally defensive. A statement to this effect was issued stressing on "verification and exchange of information". 


17. Ibid p.25.
The Socialist countries proposed that verification should also cover reduction, elimination or dismantling and storing of weapons, disbandment of units, as well as the activities of the troops and numerical non-increase of the armed forces and armaments remaining after the reductions. They confirmed the idea of setting up an international control. The initiative by the soviet leadership stunned and perplexed the Western leaders, the Western public pressure started to mount. Nevertheless they wanted to react with caution awaiting definite developments in the Soviet Policy.

However, on December 8, 1988, the NATO Council outlined its approach and called for bold new steps first outlined at 'Halifax in May 1986'.

The drastic shift of Soviet's policy from confrontation to extreme co-operation to the extent of unilateral declaration of its forces and withdrawal from Eastern Europe, by 1991 (withdraw six tank division from the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary) sharply divided the Western opinion. A conservative group consisting of conservative political leaders, officials and defense experts feared that if the Western group followed the Soviets it would open its doors for future intimidation from them followed by political instability and economic destabilisation. A corollary would be withdrawal, reduction or elimination of


American, French and British forces from Europe, especially when the West is not truly convinced of Soviet's intentions and motivation. On the other hand, the Western public had immense faith in Soviet leadership and were optimistic about build-down of the East-West military confrontation. Nevertheless, the December, 1988 communique of the NATO Ministerial Council applauded the positive step undertaken to correct the situation of Soviet superiority and reduction of vast asymmetries, which were hampering the earlier talks on arms-control. The NATO proposed a reduction of the main battle tanks, artillery and armoured troop carriers of both alliances tantamounting to a cut of about 5 percent in NATO's current holding of these armaments with Warsaw Treaty forces having to reduce to new NATO levels. However, the NATO did not propose to reduce aircraft, whose reduction had been proposed by the Warsaw Treaty document of 1988.

**NATO's proposals of 1988.**

The NATO proposed that the combined strength of 80,000 tanks of both the alliances be reduced to 40,000. It further suggested that no single country would be permitted to have more than 30 percent or 12,000 tanks. Secondly, limits on the stationing of forces on the territories of other countries were proposed to reduce the chances of surprise attack. Thirdly, to avoid undue concentration and have appropriate sub-limits the proposal was to cover the whole of Europe.

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To ensure stability measures such as transparency, notification, verification the periodic exchange of detailed data about forces and deployments, and on site inspections, were proposed.

**Area of disagreement:**

However, there was disagreement on force to force ratios. Also on consensus as to how to eliminate asymmetric reductions. Even after accepting that 'balance' did not mean parity, the question was still open what remaining imbalances would be acceptable. However, it was felt that the numerical parity would not establish military stability if it ignored quantifiable factors and its other elements like their structure, capability (in the area of C3I, i.e. Command, Control Communication, intelligence)²¹ and purely technical capabilities (for example ammunition supply, reloading capabilities of multiple rocket launchers, superiority in tank construction or communications equipment, also the human element like duration, intensity and quality of training troops). Also there was anxiety as to how the parties were "to apply reductions, limitation redeployment provisions, equal ceilings and related measures" to fulfill the objective of doing away with the disparities in the existing force structure.

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Nevertheless, it did not dampen the enthusiasm, on the contrary a joint U.S - Soviet Seminar on "Conventional Arms Reduction in Europe" sponsored by the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute for World Economy and International Relations (IHEMO) and the Institute for Defence and Disarmament Studies (IDDS) was held in Moscow from 12-17th September, 1988 between the US and Soviet arms control experts and policy-makers.23

The joint efforts of East and West were largely to increase security and stability and in turn the following objectives were outlined:24

a) on the data on the European conventional balance
b) mutually acceptable procedures for verifying conventional reductions
c) reductions to equal lower levels of offensive weapons
d) some overall further reductions in the forces of East and West.

However, they were not certain how soon the alliances could make deep cuts in conventional forces. The Soviets were more optimistic than their counterparts.

The Western experts felt that even if WTO substantially reduced its ground force balance, NATO would not be in a position to reciprocate keeping in view the length of borders they must defend and the optimal size of the forces and its strategy of


24. Ibid p.3.
forward defense.

The obstacles hampering agreement on Naval forces, aircrafts reserves and rapid reinforcement, disposition of withdrawn equipment and other conventional forces surfaced.25

The confrontation on naval forces was evident from the fact that it was deferred to next conference. Regarding the 'aircrafts', Soviets contended its superiority totalling to 1400 planes, and called for its control. On the other hand the U.S. experts questioned the Soviet estimate of a sizable NATO advantage in tactical aircraft. They contended that if Soviet interceptors were counted, the NATO numerical advantage disappears. Though they agreed that NATO had an edge in technology, they emphasised that WTO had an off setting edge in ground-based air-defense and a much larger force of interceptor air-craft.

All along the U.S. delegation was reluctant to negotiate cuts in air and naval forces, the Soviets on the other hand, disagreed on the value of reducing interceptors.

On the issue of 'Reserves and Rapid Reinforcement' NATO planners convinced of superiority of WTO's reserve forces, were keen to limit it. The Soviets too believed that the strength of Western bloc was much higher as it could increase its strength of troops in Europe by 300,000 - 400,000 within 10 - 14 days.26

25. Ibid pp.6-8.

But to diffuse the tension both sides agreed there could be ceilings on the strength of reserve units, also some reserve equipment could be put into secured storage and later cuts in reserve units could be negotiated.

As far as the "Disposition of Withdrawn Equipment" was concerned, apprehension arose over its smuggling into the zone in a crisis. Therefore, participants thought of two options, dismantling or transporting back to the US or behind the Urals.

An outstanding proposal of a "Restricted Military Area" (RMA) to greatly improve the political conditions conducive to the negotiations on substantial reduction and risk reduction, was applauded by the Soviets. However, they contended that it would be politically difficult as it would amount to virtual withdrawal of soviet from the GDR. Nevertheless establishing of such a zone would give 24 additional hours of warning, though the vulnerability of surprise attack would not diminish.

The Soviets forwarded a more feasible 'tank thin out zone' in central Europe that did not require exclusion of all offensive arms from the zone, but only removal of several tank battalions from armoured and mechanised infantry divisions and withdrawal of equipment, ammunition, fuel and spare part supplies. To counter the proposal the US delegate modified the RMA and contended that instead of 100 per cent removal of its offensive weapons it could be reduced to 50 per cent. However, the Soviets did not oblige them and sought to settle them along other issues like air and naval units.
A consensus, however, emerged on verification Regime proposed by Dean which suggested that: 27

- stress should be placed on direct inspection as well as overflight of military units repair and production sites to be monitored by on-site sensors. National Technical means of verification should also be continued.

Secondly, 400-500 inspections per alliance should be sufficient and to begin with. Later it should be negotiated annually.

Thirdly, the two sides should furnish updated data on the numbers, weapon-holding and location of controlled units, as frequently as possible.

With this background the negotiations in Vienna on 9 March, 1989 among 23 nations of the North Atlantic Treaty and Warsaw Treaty Organisation began with hope of involving large cuts in the East and modest cuts in the West. The conference was poised to take the first steps towards peace and prosperity. The cuts meant a saving of several hundred billion dollars a year.

The negotiators were aware of the confrontation existed for 45 years blocking the path to peace. The vast armies facing each

other across the border between the two Germanies had posed a major risk of uncontrolled escalation in an acute crisis. The Soviet tank division set for an offensive and Western combat aircraft ready to attack WTO bases deep behind the front lines, put the conventional balance at toes alert. It was felt that "a shift to defense oriented conventional strategies would help",\(^\text{28}\) i.e. optimized forces enabling to defend their own country and reducing the risk of surprise attack, than the forces designed for pre-emptive attack menace to East-West relations. With this in mind three objectives were laid\(^\text{29}\) though "without agreed long term objectives".\(^\text{30}\) However, at the outset the goal was to eliminate disparities prejudicial to stability and security, elimination of capability of launching surprise attack and initiating a large scale offensive without addressing the naval, nuclear and chemical weapons. But the dual capable weapons, those delivery systems that can carry both conventional and nuclear weapons were covered in the negotiations. In addition, air forces which NATO originally had sought to exclude, were also included.\(^\text{31}\) In fact, many other Western countries too desired its exemption. France and Britain


\(^{29}\) CSCE, n. 7, p.130.


were reluctant to include airplanes in the negotiations, Greece too wanted to preserve the existing ratio of forces within the country. However, all types and categories of ordinary weapons without exception and regardless of whether they required complementation such as attack aircraft, artillery and tactical missile installations based on the land territory of the participants in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals were included. For the first time it covered a larger part of the territory of Turkey and the soviet Caucasus, all the European island territories, also outlying islands on the Azore's, the Canaries and the Faroes, Madeira, Franz Josef land, Novaya, Zemlya, Spitzbergen and the Bear Island.

The beginning of the negotiations was marked by a tedious question, that of 'participation'. Most of the NATO States suggested for an inter-alliance forum, while France, Sweden and some of the neutral and non-aligned and WTO States contended that it should be widened to include all the CSCE States. France was convinced that inter-alliance forum would maintain the division of Europe thereby undermining her position, which in the past had prevented her from joining MBFR talks from 1973 until 1989. To make it effective, France suggested that each State


embarks on the path to disarmament in its own name rather than through the collective blocs. Secondly, it urged that the collective obligations of the treaty should be translated into a series of national ceiling that would be binding on each State party, i.e. a rule of national sufficiency independent of the numerical balance between alliances.

Thirdly, it called for the establishment of a system of verification based on mutual inspection. France, moreover suggested to have joint proposals and approaches with Central and Eastern Europe.

France's point of view was considered out throughout the negotiations. To meet French concerns the mandate listed the 23 countries in alphabetical order making the discussion a bit awkward in the beginning and fruitful later on.

Proposals by Germany:

Germany too felt that each and every negotiator or country must have the responsibility of safeguarding peace and stability individually and through co-operation, by eliminating asymmetries. It is particularly important for four reasons. First, today a country cannot ensure security through unilateral accumulation of military forces but is feasible only by 'co-operative security' when the interest of concerned country is

sought. Otherwise the country might end up facing economic and social problems at home and making foes abroad.

Secondly, the public is vigilant and eager to ensure that the expenses on armaments is in conformity with defense. The endeavour of the public is to prevent war and not to fan it. Thirdly, the greatly improved atmosphere through the success of Stockholm Conference and INF treaty and the feasibility of dismantling weapons, raises hopes of arms control agreement and this spirit must be maintained throughout the Vienna negotiations.

Fourthly, the East accepted the existence of insecurity and instability in conventional armaments and is achievable only through negotiations. The Federal Republic of Germany with its allies also suggested that stability must be achieved in a phased way.

As a first step a drastic reduction of the major land-forces equipment must be dealt with. The total holding of all participating countries must be 40,000 main battle tanks 33,000 artillery pieces and 56,000 armoured troop carriers. Second step should involve:

- reduction of further categories of conventional armamental equipment.
- the restructure of armed forces in order to replace offensive capability by defensive capability.


37. Ibid.
Its other valuable suggestions were, limited to stationing of the same alliance forces, limitation of arsenal of an individual country to avoid its dominance, limitation in active units and curbing the concentration of forces through sub-limits in Europe from Atlantic to the Urals. Along with this, it stressed on detailed exchange of information on the strength, deployment, the introduction of new weapons, random checks, and open dialogue to ensure that Europe is free from suppression, fear and anxiety and these values are replaced by 'the rule of law, the free exchange of ideas and movements and respect for human rights.'

Suggestion by Hungary:

Hungary plagued by geopolitical, economic and expenses on military problems and encouraged by the announcement of unilateral reduction of forces by Warsaw Treaty members and starting negotiations on conventional armed forces between the super-powers, presented a set of valuable proposals. These proposals were mainly related to the structure of the forces for reducing its capability of offence.

Hungary suggested that first the level of armed forces must be lowered and their armaments must be restructured. Especially reduction in such forces meant for attack such as the armoured troops and air-strike forces.

Secondly, the armed forces must be restructured in such a way that old organizational pattern having a high number of military structures (for example tank divisions and airborne assault units) suited for offensive purpose must give way to newer independent higher units of great firepower and mobility suited for attack. Thirdly, it was suggested that 'operational principles' must be such that it involves discussion on the principles that govern the military technical aspects, military doctrine and concepts as FOFA (Follow on Forces Attack) and the use of operational maneuver group, offensive operation even for defense purpose, must be condemned. Fourthly, it was proposed that to eliminate surprise attack the concentration of the forces must be withdrawn to the defense line along the borders. Above all it was contended that secrecy should be replaced by 'openness' to ensure that the forces were incapable of offensive action.

Other useful proposals were, unilateral steps promoting confidence, exchange of reliable data, embracing the European armies as a whole, inclusion of tactical nuclear weapons and above all taking qualitative elements into account in determining the balance of forces "so that neither side is strong enough to impose its will on the other..." directly or indirectly of its might.39

Proposals by the Warsaw Pact countries:

When the CFE talks opened in March, 1989, the Warsaw Pact countries presented a revised version of Gorbachev's three stage proposal of April, 1986.

In first stage, imbalance should be corrected in the most destabilizing categories of arms such as attack combat aircraft of short range tactical aviation, tanks, helicopters, combat armoured vehicles, armoured troop carriers and artillery including multiple launch rocket systems and artillery pieces and mortars.

Another suggestion was, the creation of zones of reduced levels of armaments along the line of contact between them. The principle that must be applied was, whoever possessed more must scrap more.

In addition to this, all States concerned should pledge to refrain from any activity which would hamper the objectives of the agreement.

In a second stage, further reductions could be made so as to reduce a further 25 per cent. In the third stage, each side would restructure its remaining forces to defensive postures.

The USSR and its allies presented figures for ceiling covering Europe as a whole and individual region.

To strengthen the process, verification accompanied by on site inspection were suggested. In addition to this an international control commission could be set up with wide powers.

The Warsaw treaty countries had intended to reduce by 1991 their armed forces by 300,000 men and the conventional weaponry by 12,000 tank and 930 combat aircraft in the zone, i.e. the area to be covered by the reduction measure that extends on the side of the Warsaw Treaty from the Elbe River to the Urals. 41

PROPOSALS BY NATO

The proposals tabled by NATO were confined to the elimination of disparities and the fixation of ceilings on tanks, artillery and armored troop carrier, where Warsaw States had a numerical advantage. The cuts in the number of aircraft, combat helicopters and manpower levels, could be negotiated only after the determination of first three categories.

On 6 May, Sir Geoffrey Howe, the British Foreign Secretary tabled the proposals on behalf of the members of the NATO Alliance to promote stability in Europe through the reductions in those armaments (tanks, artillery and ATCs) vital to the capability for large-scale offensive action. 42

41. Ibid p. 76.
First, the fixing of ceiling on main battle tanks, artillery and aircraft in the whole area between the Atlantic and the Urals, limiting each Alliance to 20,000 main battle tanks, 16,500 artillery pieces and 28,000 ATCs.

Secondly, no single country should hold more than 30 percent of the tanks, artillery and ATCs in Europe, i.e. with the total holdings in Europe of 40,000 main battle tanks, no single country would be permitted more than 12,000 main battle tanks, thus eliminating the possibility of one country domination and limiting the force holding fully consonant with any reasonable definition of "defensive sufficiency".

Thirdly, ceiling on the volume of armaments in active units which would be stationed by members of an alliance outside national territory, was imposed. That is, the holdings of stationed tanks would be limited to 3,200, of artillery to 1,700 pieces and of ATCs to 6,000. This provision would change existing deployment patterns by reducing the concentration of forward-positioning forces in active units, thereby enhancing stability.

Fourthly, it was proposed that regional sub-limits to limit holding of armaments in active units must be introduced to control the concentration of second-echelon forces in particular thus ensuring that the redeployment of forces following reduction does not create new sources of instability. The limits on holdings in active units would have the effect of ensuring that some equipment in storage under monitored conditions, to ensure compliance with the agreement measures like verification, on-site
inspection, exchange of information on forces and their deployments, were suggested without the right of refusal.

President Bush's Four Point Proposal. 43

On 29 May, at the NATO Summit meeting in Brussels, the U.S. President Mr. Bush announced a four point proposal on conventional arms control, after securing agreement from the allies on an initiative for expanding the scope of the talks and accelerating the time table.

The four point programme composed of:

1. The acceptance by Warsaw Pact nations of the proposed Western limits on tanks, armoured combat vehicle and artillery pieces pending resolution of the definition of each group equipment. He also urged for common numerical ceiling for artillery and the destruction of removed weapons.

2. He further offered to include all land based combat aircraft and helicopters by seeking that both sides reduce in these categories to a level of 15 percent below the current NATO levels. The reductions by Warsaw Pact nations would be deeper considering its numerical superiority to establish parity at lower levels. Again the removed weapons must be destroyed.

3. He also proposed a 20 percent cut in combat manpower, i.e. 275,000 each on US and Soviet ground and air forces stationed outside of national territory in the Atlantic to Urals zone. For establishing parity the Soviets would have to reduce 600,000 strong red army to 325,000 in Eastern Europe. In addition President Bush called on President Gorbachev to accelerate time-table in order to reach and implement a CFE agreement in one year and accompanied reduction by 1992 or 1993 against five to six years suggestion by Moscow.

Above all he called for open skies policy and openness in conducting military activities.

President Bush's initiative gave a new impetus to the talks.

NATO leaders approved all four steps at the summit meeting and charged the High Level Task force (HTLP) with revising the Western CFE negotiating position accordingly.

The Bush proposals challenged the Soviet Union on manpower cuts beside meeting their demands on aircraft and helicopters. These proposals also diluted the row at NATO Summit meeting over modernizing or limiting U.S. short range nuclear weapons deployed in Europe.44 The Soviets applauded the Bush's proposal of expanding the CFE agenda by including aircraft, helicopters and manpower, but objected to some of the details.

However, proposals and counter proposals were submitted by W.T.O. on 24 June and NATO on 13 July respectively. Many rounds of discussion took place and in fourth round both alliance groups presented draft texts45 with a view of narrowing down the area of disagreement. However, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe held in Paris from 14 to 21 November, 1990 resulted in the conclusion of CFE Treaty.

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ANALYSIS OF THE TREATY

Signing the historical treaty on Conventional Force Reduction in Europe, on 19 November 1990, in Paris, by the Heads of Government of 22 States (of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Warsaw Treaty Organization), marked a major breakthrough in the history of disarmament. The leaders affirmed the "end of the era of division" and pledging that their nations were "no longer adversaries", committed to "security and stability in Europe". It was a commendable achievement in achieving security at lower levels of forces, without amassing the enormous arsenals which had earlier been the yardstick for security. In addition, it meant huge savings of several hundred billion dollars a year, (estimated as $630 billion on NATO & WTO Conventional forces). Out of the estimated world military spending of $970 billion a year. Concluded in less than two years, it could secure strict numerical parity between the conventional ground and air forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the destruction of tens of thousands of major weapon systems and the creation of extremely intrusive monitoring and verification regime. It could be achieved because Gorbachev with his allies, agreed to the establishment of equal levels of conventional arms between the


47. Randall Forsberg "The Vienna Talks: Demilitarizing East-West Relations", n. 28 p. 1.

two alliances (NATO and WARSAW) by withdrawing its forces from Hungary and Czechoslovakia in 1991, from Germany and Poland by 1994 as a commitment to withdrawal of forward deployed troops in Eastern Europe though it meant relinquishing its numerical superiority in Europe. The Treaty was hailed as a step in right direction. President Bush enhancing the importance of CFE commented that the "CFE would be the most ambitious conventional agreement ever concluded". 49

Sweden impressed by the results of CFE, dismantling the confrontation of the alliances, decided to take up the membership of European Community and began to review its policy of isolationism. 50

Before discussing its merits, it is of paramount importance to analyse the provisions of the treaty.

PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY 51

The Treaty consists of XXIII articles, and applies to 22 nations and tens of thousands of armament spread from the Atlantic to the Urals. The treaty subjects these weapons to three numerical limits:

49. Address by President Bush at the Oklahoma State University, May 4, 1990 (United States Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, Washington DC) p. 3.


51. Excerpts from the Text of the Treaty.
- overall ceilings for each alliance.
- sub-limits for each alliance in each four "zones" in Europe.
- maximum single country levels.

The Treaty also includes provisions for on-site inspection, exchanges of information and data, measures to ensure verification of compliance with its provision, a mechanism designed to resolve discrepancies in data exchanges and ambiguities and directions on how State must dispose of equipment in excess of CFE limits. A brief sketch of important articles is given below:

**Article I** addresses five categories of conventional armed forces, battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, artillery combat aircraft and combat helicopters.

**Article II** Each of the category of treaty limited equipment is defined along the area of application. In addition each alliance referred to as "group of States".

**Article IV** sets alliance wide ceilings. It also provides for lower sublimits on weapons in three concentric zones in Europe.

**Article V** establishes separate limits for the so called "flank" areas of Europe.

**Article VI** sets limits for single countries known as "sufficiency" rule.
Article VII requires each country to consult with the other member of its alliance to ensure that the sum of each group of States holding does not exceed permitted levels. Article VIII outlines the time tables for the reductions, rules and procedures for the conversion of battle tanks and ACVs to non-military purposes.

Article XIII is meant to ensure verification of treaty compliance.

Article XIV regulates verification and inspection.

Article XV grants each state the right to use national or multi-national technical means to verify compliance with the treaty.

Article XVI establishes the joint consultative group (JCG) for resolving ambiguities, disputes and any other matter for enhancing the treaty.

Article XVII of the treaty requires that the parties to the CFE agreement "continue the negotiations on conventional armed forces" and furthering arms control measures not later than March, 1992.

Article XIX each country has the right to withdraw from the treaty if its "supreme interests" are jeopardized.
Article XXII says that the treaty enters into force 10 days after instruments of ratification have been deposited by all signatories with the Netherlands which is designated as depository State.

Annexure II of the CFE treaty contains 3 declarations:

a) an agreement of 22 CFE States not to exceed 430 land-based naval aircraft for each alliance group of States, with a single country limit of 400.

b) The German Government undertook to reduce the personnel strength of the armed forces of the United Germany to 370,000 of which no more than 345,000 can be air and ground forces.

c) In follow on meeting the 22 States undertake not to increase their manpower.

**MAIN FEATURES OF THE TREATY**

Ceiling on equipments - The treaty addressed five major categories of equipment vital for surprise attack in Europe or any major offensive action, thereby establishing a ceiling of 20,000 battle tanks, 30,000 armoured combat vehicles with sublimits of 18,000 for armoured infantry fighting vehicles and 1,500 for

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heavy armoured combat vehicles, 20,000 artillery, 6,800 combat aircraft and 2,000 attack helicopters for each of the two groups of countries. This meant that the Soviets would be required to reduce at least 19,000 weapons against 3,000 for all of the 16 NATO countries combined, in addition to the unilateral reduction announced prior to the signing of treaty and amounting to 26 percent cut-back. However, even after limiting the tanks to 20,000, Europe would still remain a heavily armed continent on earth occupied with millions of troops. Moreso the retention of 20,000 tanks means, it is in four to five times the number Nazi Germany had at the beginning of the Second World War. Therefore, it is believed that while the CFE might tackle the risk of surprise attack, "it does not solve the problem of a prepared sustained offensive ..."attack.

In addition, the 22 signatories made a political commitment outside the Treaty to limit the land based naval aircraft to 430 for each group of States, with no more than 400 for any one country.

To comply with the treaty, the six members of the Warsaw Pact signed a treaty at Budapest on 3 November, 1990. The NATO, too, agreed to national limitations consulted through

55. Ibid p.13
national mechanism. This position had undermined Soviet's position. In 1988, the Soviets alone had 41,000 battle tanks, 57,000 armoured combat vehicles and 42,000 pieces of artillery in Europe in the area of application of the treaty. And now with the ceiling relationship of forces between NATO and USSR, it would be to NATO's advantage.

Tanks and armoured combat vehicles 1.5:1, Artillery 1.3-1.5:1, military aircraft and attack helicopters 1.3:1.

The attempted equalization of military power of the two sides has in fact led to the advantage of NATO. In addition, the exclusion of naval forces on the pretext of incapacity of 'surprise attack' (by passing its role in land conflicts as in Korea (1950-53), Vietnam (1964-1973), and recently in Persian Gulf area), has transformed NATO's military superiority at sea into a general military superiority.

DEFENCE SUFFICIENCY:

One of the most important features of the Treaty is the "Sufficiency" rule, by setting limits for single countries. No single country may exceed the limits of 13,300 tanks, 13,700 artillery pieces, 20,000 armoured combat vehicles, 5,150 combat aircraft and 1,500 attack helicopters.


It will in practice constrain only Soviet forces because no other country's armed forces are large enough to jump up the ceilings. These levels permit the Soviet Union to field an average of 68 percent of its alliance's total holdings. The effect of this will be to limit Soviet Weapons to a level of approximately one-third lower than NATO's total strength. After calculations, it is concluded that not only the Soviet capacity for sudden offensive operations in Europe will vanish, but also there would no longer be strategic zone of allied States to allow the Soviet Union some defensive depth next to its own territory. 59

In November, 1990 the Soviet General Staff calculated that the co-relation of forces had turned against Moscow by a ratio of 106 to 1. That too before they witnessed the U.S. victory over Gulf, shocked by the event, Marshal Dmitri Yazov called publicly for the review of its defence capability and replanning of "defensive sufficiency" by "offensive doctrine" coupled with greater reliance on high-tech weapons and marine professional army. 60 In fact, in 1990 after the GDR joined the NATO Group, the Soviet Union had asked for higher sufficiency rule of 40 percent, to compensate for its lost allies. However, it was not agreed. Finally, James Baker and Edward Shevardnadze resolved the issue on October 3.


VERIFICATION AND INSPECTION:

A consensus emerged about the need for intrusive means of verifying military activities. The provision comprises national and multinational technical means of verification of declared and undeclared sites. Each State has the right to conduct and an obligation to accept inspection of military sites, to ensure verification of compliance of the treaty.

For inspection purposes the treaty is divided into four phases:

1. During the first 120 days after the treaty's entry into force (the baseline validation period), each State is obliged to accept inspections equal to 20 percent of its "object of verification" (OVN).

2. In the second phase, in subsequent three years each State must complete its reduction and must accept inspections equal to 10 percent.

3. Phase III entails intensive inspection equal to 20 percent, during the 120 days following the three year reduction period.

4. Phase IV lasting till the treaty lasts, each country is subject to annual inspections equal to 15 percent. In addition, countries are permitted up to five inspections annually of each country within their own group of States.
Since the States had participated as 'group of States' and not as a part of any bloc, each wanted to be an active and full participant in the monitoring and verification process and conduct inspections within their own group. For example, Hungary was keen to inspect the Soviet territory and other 21 participants were equally anxious when the transfer of 80,000 pieces of Treaty Limited Equipment (TLE) from the zone became clear. 61

**STORAGE PROVISION:**

This limits the readiness of both groups of armed forces by restricting active units. In addition, ground equipment must be allotted permanent storage sites. The ceiling for equipment in active units in each group is 16,500 tanks, 17,000 artillery pieces and 27,300 armoured combat vehicles. The treaty also includes regional numerical sublimits.

**REDUCTION:**

Reduction must be undertaken in one of the eight ways: destruction, conversion to non-military purposes, placement on static display, modification, reclassification use as ground targets or ground instructional purpose. Section III specifies five methods of reduction. It comprises of, severing, explosive demolition, deformation, smashing and the use of target drones.

Conversion to non-military purposes

Section VII of the Protocol on Reduction sets out rules and procedures for the conversion of battle tanks and ACVs to non-military purposes.

Battle tanks (T-54s, T-55s, T-62s, T-64s and Leopard 1s) and ACVs (BMP-1s and BTR-60s) can be converted into 14 different kinds of listed non-military vehicle: general-purpose prime movers, bulldozers, fire-fighting vehicles, cranes, power unit vehicles, mineral fine-crushing vehicles, quarry vehicles, rescue vehicles, casualty evacuation vehicles, transport vehicles, oil rig vehicles, clean-up vehicles for oil spills, ice breakers and environmental vehicles. The Treaty allows each State party to convert 15 per cent of its ACVs (not to exceed 3000) and 5.7 per cent of its tanks (not to exceed 750) or 150 items, whichever is the higher (section VIII, para 2).

Reclassification of combat-capable aircraft

A separate Protocol on Reclassification sets out the rules for reclassifying combat aircraft Su-15U, Su-17U, MiG-15U, MiG-21U, MiG-23U, UIL-28 and MiG-25U aircraft can be converted into unarmed trainer aircraft within 40 months of entry into force of the Treaty, but no more than 550 aircraft can be removed from Treaty limits in this way (section 1, para 2).

Recategorization of helicopters

The Protocol on Helicopter Recategorisation sets out the
rules by which multi-purpose attack helicopters may be recategorized as combat support helicopters, not subject to Treaty limits, by removing attachments for weapons and all integrated fire control and targeting systems. Such recategorization must be notified and certified by inspection.

Achievements

In the wake of the dissolution of Warsaw Pact, unification of Germany, end of Cold War, political earthquake with the eruption of democratic values in Eastern Europe, emerged a treaty, vastly improving strategic, economic, political and international foundations. Thus laid "a radically new European security environment". Baker highlighted the significance of the treaty:

1. Strategically it laid a sound foundation for a stable, secure and new European order by including provisions like 'predictability and openness', extensive intrusive verification, exchange of detailed information and Joint Consultative Group.

2. Economically, CFE allows the US to maintain deterrence at lower levels of forces allowing for reduction in the resources on military equipment.

3. Politically the treaty helps in the removal of the Soviet forces from Eastern Europe, preventing the

stationing of forces without the express consent of the State, supporting the bilateral accords for the elimination of Soviet troops and deployments. Further more, it ensures stable and secure military balance.

Beside enhancing security and stability, the treaty enormously helped in speeding up modernizing of armaments, assisting industrially lesser developed partners, transferring modern equipment to the countries on the flanks, at the same time reduce the overall numbers to required levels. To accomplish these benefits following steps are in making—one, thirty years old equipment of 10,000 tanks would be destroyed by NATO realizing the dual purpose, fulfilling the CFE requirement and relinquishing the outdated equipment. However, for Soviets it would be less advantageous as their equipment is less than 10 years old.

Secondly, NATO's desire of improving strategic balance in the Southern region (Greece, Portugal and Turkey) would be fulfilled by transferring its equipment to alliance developing defence industry.

Thirdly, modernizing of equipment in Greece, Turkey and Scandivean countries would go a long way to strengthening regional security.

Fourthly, many countries inherited or developed substandard/or costly equipment, that they could be rationalised

with only one or two models of tank, carrier or artillery pieces thereby economizing and modernizing them. In a nutshell, the CFE ceiling proved to be a blessing in disguise for replacing old weaponry by more modern equipment without circumventing the treaty. Of course, "Force modernization is an accepted principles by all signatories to the CFE Treaty".64

The Soviets transferred a great deal of weaponry to the East of the Urals. Alliance equipment available for transfer included Leopard I, M-80 tanks, M-113 personnel carriers and M-110 artillery systems.

Within NATO, agreement had been reached on the principle of equipment transfer. Donations of main battle tank have been initiated by the Netherlands and Italy to Greece, Turkey, Spain and some to Denmark, Norway and Portugal.

A transfer programme is beneficial in the light of new international scenario, i.e. equipment maintenance, cost of spare-parts, improvement in operational and logistic interoperability, cost of technological advances, rises in the unit costs of major equipment system, shrinking markets and the necessity of maintaining some form of strategic industrial base.

DELAY IN RATIFICATION:

For resolving the dispute over the ratification many steps were undertaken including exchanging of letters between President

64. Ibid.
Bush and Gorbachev, bilateral meeting between Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister, and various other meetings in Joint Consultative Group in and outside the forum. Amazingly after sorting out vital and controversial issues, once again mistrust erupted and delayed the ratification, what were the causes of this mistrust?

CAUSES:

First, the West accused Soviets of violating and reinterpreting the treaty to their advantage. On the very initial exchange of the data, the West realised the three coastal defence divisions, which were earlier not part of naval infantry notified by Soviets as part of naval infantry and strategic rocket forces thereby making it fall outside the scope of the Treaty. By virtue of this, Soviets excluded 5,457 pieces of armaments and equipment from their ceiling. Soviets violated Article III because under this all battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, artillery combat aircraft and attack helicopters within the area of application fell under its ceiling. Furthermore, it had not reported all of its holdings in the area from the


68. Ibid p.21.
Atlantic to the Urals. 69

Secondly, instead of destroying equipment, the Soviets moved it to the east of the Ural mountain. Though some of it had been withdrawn before the signing of the treaty, nevertheless it generated a great deal of anxiety as it violated the spirit of treaty.

Thirdly, the Soviet interpretation of the treaty to their advantage, substantially reducing the scope of inspection because of transfer of 80,000 pieces of TLE from the Zone, 70 further jolted the confidence of the West. Fourthly, the Treaty provided that a corrected version of the initial information could be furnished not later than 90 days after signature of the treaty, i.e. on 17 February, 1991. Yet, the Soviets did not submit the corrected version despite the anxiety of the participants.

Continuing negotiations, yielding of Soviets thereby agreeing to West's demands resulted in resolving the half-yearly old crises. The participants heaved a sigh of relief and the preparation for the CFE IA commenced.

The Soviet representatives both at the Extra-ordinary Conference and at a special meeting of Joint Consultative Group conceded to: 71

- a) respect all CFE ceilings and sub-ceiling, at the same time sticking to the position on Article III.

69. Michael Moodie, n. 56, p. 22.
70. Jane M.O. Sharp n. 58, p. 420.
b) non-increase of three 'contested categories' (coastal defence, naval infantry and strategic rocket).

c) the additional TLE to be eliminated by 50 percent actually destroyed or converted for civilian purposes and the remaining 50 percent would be removed behind the Urals. Furthermore, notification would be provided of the destruction or conversion of armaments east of the Urals.

The treaty limits the Soviets to 13,150 tanks, 13,300 artillery pieces, 20,000 armoured combat vehicles West of the Urals, 68 percent below the levels of just two years ago.

PROBLEMS:

Coupled with the achievements were inherent problems and dangers.

The first danger was a tendency towards complacency which might animate the elated participants to reallocate military expenditure into other social commitment jeopardizing their own security.

Secondly, military authorities were quite perplexed in defining the extent and credibility of the threat specially in air, aware of the massive, well-equipped and modern offensive Soviet air power.

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Thirdly, there was a wide gap in the perceptions of the politicians and military. The politicians were in a state of euphoria, felicitating the victory of NATO and peace thereby reducing the role of militarism; on the other hand, military officials were not prepared to reduce the "armed forces in Europe to the status of honour guard" unless they were not sure of further arms agreements followed by the CFE.  

Related problems were regarding the redundant equipment under the CFE treaty. The two options were destruction and transfer to lesser developed allies. The preference for the second alternative posed many difficulties for the donor countries. The first problem was the approval of public. 

The second problem was regarding the actual funding of transfer and repair expenses, expected to be $100 millions. Furthermore, the receiving nations should highlight their financial incapability to meet expenses like transportation, repair cost, costs in training and building of infrastructure. The contention was that the cost must be shared. Therefore, the matter was referred to Alliance Infrastructure Authorities to review problems relating to the building of infrastructure especially US 401st Tactical Fighter Wing to Crotone, Italy. In addition, the NATO military officials are putting their head, together to overcome the Herculien task.

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74. Ibid, p.19

75. David T Lightburn n. 63, p. 62.
Beside these, the treaty had a few more shortcomings.

CFE made little impact on Northern Europe which still was considered a strategic core area. It left the important issues of reserve calls up, movement of ground equipment and manpower.

Although it dealt effectively with the risk of surprise attack, but did not solve the problem of a prepared sustain offense. More so in the absence of Soviet Central Government there was anxiety about long term Soviet capabilities for mobilization and intimidation.

As regards the impact of CFE on NATO was concerned the NATO planners insists on:

1. substantial increase in aircraft and attack helicopters.
2. build up forces (air and ground) in NATO's flank States such as Greece, Portugal, Spain and Turkey.
3. more weapons for Germany, in every category, more than even what Germany had before unification.

In a nutshell, it aimed at a higher mobility, more focus on reserve units, mobilization capability and reinforcement. But continuing emphasis on offensive capability such as deep strike air craft, long-range missiles and rapid deployment of armoured

and mechanised units could raise the risk of what analyst Daniel Nelson termed "a high tech 1914."

"As no single power or alliance will possess offensive potential - its forward deployments, fears of confronting a rapidly reinforced adversary which lacking defensive depth or a capacity for counter-attack will heighten tensions..... once any State was thought to be taking the first steps toward mobilization, adversaries were drawn rapidly into hostilities". 78

Another important omission was naval forces. Moreso it does not affect the troop levels of States other than USA, the USSR and unified Germany. The unilateral cuts by other countries were not subject to verification. 79

However, the tension was on the decline especially in Eastern Europe where all the five non-Soviet Warsaw Pact States had gone a long way in the direction of defense restructuring, reducing their forces. Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria were contended to reduce the forces to establish eternal peace in the continent.

FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS.

As provided in Article XVIII of the treaty, the follow on negotiations are required for further strengthening of the CFE treaty. The negotiations were to be continued with the same mandate and be completed before the 1992 CSCE follow up meeting.

79. Ibid.
in Helsinki. Keeping up with this spirit, the negotiations formally started in December last year, but the ratification in June prompted and energised the participants.

CFE-I has three main objectives. One, the delegations hoped to reach agreement on personnel limits which were not included in CFEI. Although when CFEI was signed, all 22 parties agreed in a side declaration not to increase their military personnel strength, Germany agreed to reduce its troop strength to 370,000.

Proposals from the West and Soviets had been introduced to cut down on manpower. On 4 July, in Luxembourg all 16 NATO members proposed an outline of a possible manpower agreement. It was suggested that each participant would limit and reduce through international commitment its military personnel base on land, and on forces in the area of application. These limitations would be implemented within 40 months of the entry into force of the CFE treaty. The Soviet proposal also resembled the West's suggestions but less far reaching. Nevertheless, three steps were suggested to resolve the differences:

a. A preliminary agreement should be sought on the scope of the planned limitation.

82. Ambassador Lambert, n. 67 pp. 24- 25.
b. Declaration of current manpower and proposed ceiling.

c. The declared national levels would be incorporated into a document recording their international commitments.

The second objective of the CFE-1 would be 'aerial inspection' which remained unfinished for the Paris Summit. These were overshadowed by the 'Open Skies' negotiations.

The third objective of CFE-1 was to incorporate "stabilizing measures" such as constraints on large scale exercises, the call up of reservists and transfer of forces from Europe.

A New Forum: The charter of Paris, signed on November 21 codified a recent consensus that after 1992 CSCE review in Helsinki, the CFE and CSBM negotiations should be merged into a single 34-nation forum.