

Russia Not in Compliance With CFE Flank Limits

- [Arms Control Today](#)

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RUSSIAN DATA SUBMITTED on July 1 under the 1992 Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty revealed that Moscow's holdings of tanks, armored combat vehicles (ACVs) and heavy artillery are in excess of the CFE "flank" limits that entered into force on May 31. The United States responded on July 6 by stating that it "expected all states-parties to comply with the treaty and its associated documents." Russia is in compliance with its overall weapons limits.

Trying to address Russian complaints that the treaty's flank limits, which cap the number of tanks, ACVs and artillery in the northern and southern flanks of Europe, unfairly restricted Russian weapons deployments on its own territory, the 30 CFE states-parties agreed in May 1996 to increase Russia's flank ceilings. Under the agreement, Russia's original flank limits of 1,300 tanks, 1,380 ACVs and 1,680 artillery would apply to a smaller area, while the limits for the original zone would be set at 1,800 tanks, 3,700 ACVs and 2,400 artillery.

According to the July 1 data, Russia is in excess of its smaller, revised zone limits by approximately 260 tanks, 1,500 ACVs and 200 artillery pieces. In the original zone, Russian ACV holdings are more than 240 above its legal limit. Moscow, however, pledged to eliminate some 285 ACVs, deemed not economically repairable, in the original zone. Such a move, if carried out, would resolve the compliance issue for the original zone.

The United States and other NATO countries are unlikely to push Moscow on its non-compliance out of concern for jeopardizing ongoing negotiations to replace the treaty's current bloc and zone limits with national and territorial ceilings. (Flank limits, however, will be retained under an adapted treaty.) As part of the negotiations, which are targeted for completion by this November, the parties reached a preliminary agreement on March 30 to increase Russia's ACV limit in the smaller, revised zone to 2,140. Because this limit would not apply to Russian ACVs in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, Russia's current ACV holdings in the smaller, revised zone would be in compliance with this future limit.

Meanwhile, at the adaptation talks being held in Vienna to modernize the CFE Treaty, Russia stepped up its efforts to increase transparency measures on NATO airpower in the wake of the air war against Yugoslavia. Since the start of the negotiations in January 1997, Moscow has sought to limit where NATO aircraft could be deployed, but the alliance has refused to put the issue on the table. NATO is expected to take a similarly hard line on Russia's latest airpower proposals.

On July 22, Russia and Moldova endorsed a plan for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to work out a timetable for the withdrawal of Russian forces from Moldova. Chisinau had rejected on June 3 the latest Russian proposal, which aimed to complete the withdrawal by December 2005. The withdrawal of Russian forces from Moldova, long pledged by Moscow, was also part of the March 30 agreement.

Negotiators at the adaptation talks broke for a summer recess on July 23 and are scheduled to resume work at an August 31 plenary meeting.

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