



NATO Suspends CFE Treaty Amid Russian Withdrawal

For Prelims: Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, [NATO \(North Atlantic Treaty Organization\)](#), [Cold War](#), [Warsaw Pact](#), World War II, The North Atlantic Treaty.

For Mains: Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, World wars, Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, [NATO \(North Atlantic Treaty Organization\)](#) has announced the formal suspension of the **Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)**, a key [Cold War](#)-Era Security Treaty in response to **Russia's pullout from the deal**.

What is the Background of Russia's Pullout from CFE?

- **About CFE Treaty:**
 - The CFE Treaty, signed in **1990** and fully ratified in **1992**, aimed to prevent **massing of conventional armed forces by NATO** and [Warsaw Pact](#) countries near mutual borders during the Cold War.
 - It placed **limits on the deployment of conventional military forces** in Europe and played a significant role in **reducing tensions and arms build-up in the region**.
 - This treaty was **one of several Cold War-era agreements** involving Russia and the United States.
- **Russia's Withdrawal:**
 - Russia had suspended its participation in the CFE Treaty in 2007 and formally announced **its intention to withdraw in 2015**.
 - The recent move to finalise the withdrawal came after the Russian President signed a bill **denouncing the treaty in May 2023**.
 - Russia has blamed the US and its allies for the withdrawal, **citing their "destructive position" on the treaty**.
- **Ukraine Conflict's Impact:**
 - [Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#) in February 2022, which led to a **significant military presence in Ukraine**, influenced its decision to **withdraw from the treaty**.
 - The conflict has **direct implications for NATO member states** that share borders with Ukraine, such as Poland, Slovakia, Romania, and Hungary.

What are Russia's Concerns and NATO's Position?

- Russia claims CFE is no longer serves its interests because it was signed to restrict the use of conventional weapons and equipment and not other advanced weapons.
- Russia cited that preserving the CFE Treaty has become unacceptable from the standpoint of **its fundamental security interests**, citing developments in Ukraine and NATO's expansion.

- NATO underlines its commitment to reducing military risk, preventing misperceptions, and maintaining security.
- The suspension of the CFE Treaty underscores the ongoing tensions between Russia and NATO, which have significant implications for **global security and regional stability**, particularly in **Eastern Europe**.

What is the Cold War?

- The Cold War was a **period (1945-1991) of geopolitical tension** between the Soviet Union and its satellite states (the Eastern European countries), and the United States with its allies (the Western European countries) after **World War II**.
- Post World War II, the world **got divided into two power blocs** dominated by two superpowers viz. the Soviet Union and the US.
 - The two superpowers were primarily engaged in an ideological war between the capitalist USA and the communist Soviet Union.
- The term "Cold" is used because there **was no large-scale fighting directly between the two sides**.



What are Other Cold-War Era NATO and USSR Treaties?

- **The North Atlantic Treaty (1949):**
 - The North Atlantic Treaty, also known as the **Washington Treaty**, established NATO on 4th April, 1949.
 - It was a **collective defence alliance formed by Western nations**, including the US, Canada, and various European countries.

- **The Warsaw Pact (1955):**
 - The Warsaw Pact, formally known as the **Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance**, was signed on 14th May, 1955.
 - It was a response to NATO and established a similar mutual **defence alliance among the Eastern Bloc countries**, led by the Soviet Union.
 - The Warsaw Pact included the **Soviet Union, East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania, among others.**
- **The Four Power Agreement on Berlin (1971):**
 - This agreement, signed on 3rd September, 1971, between the **United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union**, addressed the **status of Berlin during the Cold War.**
 - It aimed to **improve relations and ease tensions** in the divided city.
- **The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty (1987):**
 - It was signed on 8th December, 1987, by the U.S. President and Soviet General Secretary, the INF Treaty eliminated an **entire class of intermediate-range nuclear missiles from Europe.**
 - The treaty marked a significant step in **reducing Cold War tensions** and nuclear arms.
- **The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) and START Treaties:**
 - **SALT** were a **series of bilateral conferences and international treaties** signed between the United States and the Soviet Union.
 - These treaties had the goal of **reducing the number of long-range ballistic missiles (strategic arms)** that each side could possess and manufacture.
 - First treaty, known as SALT I, was signed in 1972.
 - By signing SALT I, the US and the USSR agreed to a limited number of ballistic missiles, as well as a limited number of missile deployment sites.

Note: In February 2023, Russia had announced to **suspend its participation in the [New START Treaty](#)**, the last remaining major military agreement with the United States.

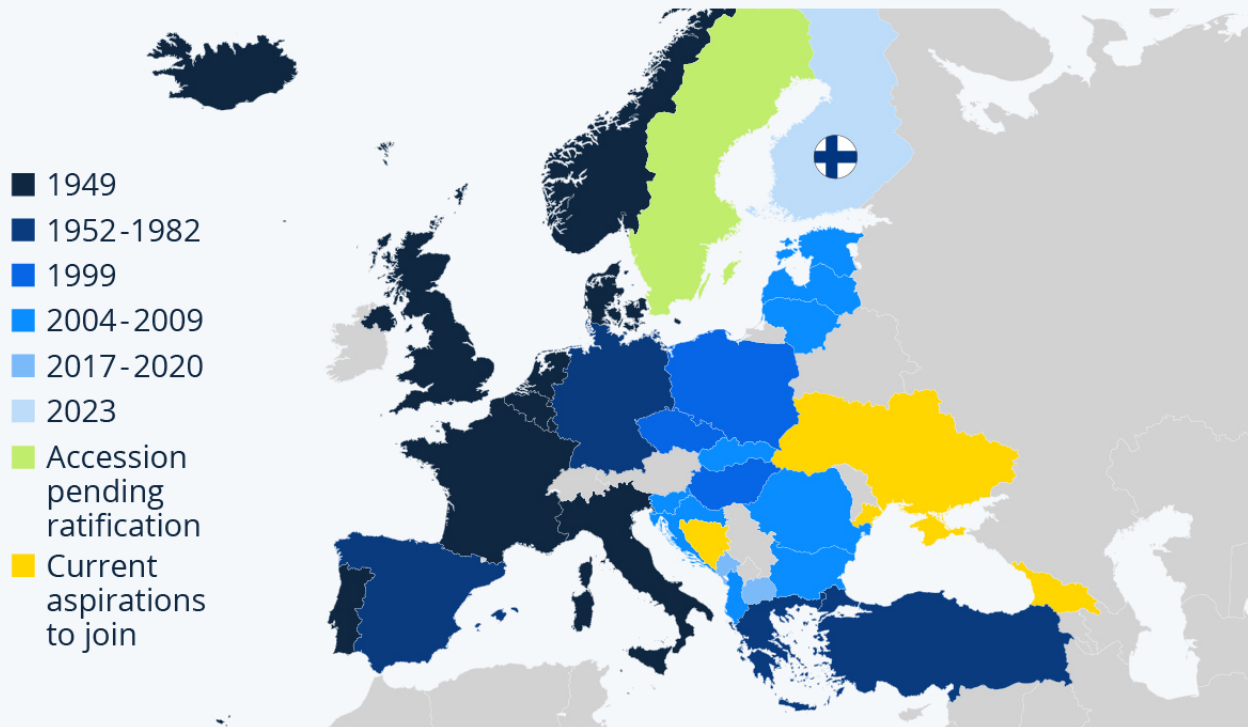
- The New START Treaty came into force in February, 2011 between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on measures for the **further reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms.**
- **The Helsinki Accords (1975):**
 - The Helsinki Final Act, signed in August, 1975, was not a treaty but a **declaration of principles agreed upon by 35 countries**, including NATO members and Warsaw Pact countries.
 - It aimed to improve **relations between East and West** and included commitments to respect human rights and territorial integrity.

What is NATO?

- **About:**
 - **NATO, or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization**, is a political and military alliance consisting of 31 member countries.
 - It was formed in 1949 to promote mutual defence and collective security among its members.
- **Members:**
 - **In 1949, there were 12 founding members of the Alliance:** Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States.
 - **Since then, 19 more countries have joined the Alliance:** Greece and Turkey (1952); Germany (1955); Spain (1982); Czechia, Hungary and Poland (1999); Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (2004); Albania and Croatia (2009); Montenegro (2017); North Macedonia (2020); and Finland (2023).

Finland Becomes 31st Member of NATO

European countries by year they joined NATO



Map excludes the United States and Canada, both founding members of NATO.

▪ Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium:

- Headquarters of Allied Command Operations: **Mons, Belgium.**

▪ Special Provision:

- **Article 5:** Article 5 of the NATO treaty is a key provision that states that an attack on one member is an attack on all members.
 - This provision has only been invoked once, **after the 9/11 terrorist** attacks in the United States.
- However, NATO's protection **does not extend to members' civil wars or internal coups.**

▪ Alliances of NATO:

- [Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council \(EAPC\)](#)
- [Mediterranean Dialogue](#)
- [Istanbul Cooperation Initiative \(ICI\)](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Mains:

Q. Evaluate the economic and strategic dimensions of India's Look East Policy in the context of the post Cold War international scenario. **(2016)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/nato-suspends-cfe-treaty-amid-russian-withdrawal>

