Arms control or disarmament?  
The case of the former Yugoslavia

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Efforts to restore peace to the former Yugoslavia were generally divided into two categories — military tasks and civilian tasks. The Implementation Force (IFOR) and subsequent Stabilizing Force (SFOR) were responsible for military operations such as the separation of forces and the creation of a zone of separation. Civil efforts headed by Carl Bildt focused on elections and reconstruction. While this ‘division of labor’ was useful in separating organization responsibilities, other actions that were required by the Dayton Accords were not easily placed in either category. These included the arrest of war criminals and arms control arrangements.

The arms control and confidence building proposals contained in the Dayton Accords were quite ambitious. Under Article II of Annex IA the signatories agreed to commence negotiations on confidence and security building measures within seven days after the treaty entered into force. They also agreed (Article III) to accept restrictions on the importation of light arms for 90 days and heavier weapons for 180 days, and (under Article IV) to begin negotiations within 30 days to establish reduced levels of armament and military manpower. This portion of the accord was completed and signed 14 June 1996. Finally, the agreement called for subsequent negotiations (Article V) with the goal of establishing a regional balance in and around the former Yugoslavia. Such discussions would include other parties (i.e., Slovenia, Hungary, Austria, Bulgaria, and Macedonia) and would be conducted under the auspices of the OSCE.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the arms control portion of the Dayton Accord and the agreements that have been made between the parties. It will describe the conduct of the negotiations as well as the ensuing treaties, what they may bode for future, and make certain policy recommendations.

It is important from the very beginning, however, to make a clear distinction between ‘arms control’ and ‘disarmament’. ‘Arms control’ refers to agreements between two or more states to limit or reduce certain categories of weapons or military operations in order to diminish the possibility of conflict. During the Cold War conventional arms discussions resulted in the ratification of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) plus Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs) agreed to as part of the ongoing discussions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

‘Disarmament’ is normally imposed by a state or group on one or more

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states at the conclusion of a war. Examples are the limits imposed on Germany at the end of World Wars I and II, or the restrictions placed on Iraq by the United Nations at the conclusion of the Gulf War. This distinction is important because while an arms control regime is maintained by a harmony of interests among the participants, disarmament requires external pressure to insure implementation and compliance. The clearest example of a 'hard' conventional arms agreement is CFE Treaty. In comparison, the Dayton Accord and subsequent arms control agreements exhibit aspects of both 'arms control' and 'disarmament'. This important distinction may suggest inherent obstacles to successful discussions and final implementation.

It is also critical to recall that arms control is a 'method or means' to achieve the 'objective' of improved security. But arms control is not an objective by itself. Furthermore, though the focus of any negotiation is the details of the prospective agreement, the arms control process must always be consistent with the direction of national or alliance security strategy. Consequently, arms control is a political activity and cannot be divorced from other aspects of a nation's security or foreign policy. It is affected by domestic events, other issues between states, and the bureaucratic process of the participating parties.

Article II negotiations on Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs)

Surprisingly, the parties achieved agreement on a package of CSBMs by the deadline, 26 January 1996. The accord uses existing CSBMs as a model and was designed to be effective upon signature. This agreement included fifteen measures:

- Exchange of military information;
- Notification of changes in command structure or equipment holdings;
- Risk reduction;
- Notification, observation, and constraints on military activities;
- Deployment restrictions and exercises in certain geographic areas;
- Restraints on the reintroduction of foreign forces;
- Withdrawal of heavy weapons and forces to designated areas;
- Restrictions on the location of heavy weapons;
- Notification of the disbandment of special operations forces;
- Information and monitoring of weapons manufacturing capabilities;
- Program of military contacts and cooperation;
- Principles governing non-proliferation;
- Verification and inspection regime;
- Communications;
- Implementation assessment.