

side has to rely almost exclusively on adroit diplomacy, and even here, with regards to negotiating territorial and maritime disputes, it has very limited experience to go by.

Have the CBMs been successful at all?

- The only standard by which one can ultimately assess the success of CBMs is whether or not trust and confidence have been achieved through transparency, communications, and other means earlier discussed. China has taken bold and unprecedented initiatives towards both the Philippines and ASEAN, particularly concerning high-level military exchanges. But it is too early to say whether these have had the desired effect of increasing trust, especially since China's words have often not been matched by its actions in the Spratlys.
- Persistent dialogue on the issue has at least succeeded in making known to each side the perceptions and concerns of the other side. Even the appreciation of how far apart they are on certain issues, as in the case of China and the Philippines, is an important first step in moving closer and finding common ground.
- However, it should be noted that in the case of asymmetrical power relations, the burden of showing good intentions often falls on the shoulders of the superior power, because it is the party that evokes the greater fear and suspicion. Since the cause for the mistrust and suspicion is sometimes the asymmetry itself, CBMs can succeed only in a situation where a strategic basis for long-term cooperation can be laid, when the superior power can be convinced that it has a stake in the weaker state's viability and security.

What have been the effects of asymmetry? Among them:

- The weaker state may bemoan the lack of tactical options in negotiating a confidence building process with a stronger state. Even before it begins to build confidence with the other party, it requires building self-confidence and assurance that despite the asymmetry, a win-win solution may yet be possible.
- On the other hand, its own weakness may be its strength because: (1) it can make demands that will not be considered threatening by the superior power; and (2) the differences in military power constrain the bigger one from use of force, because of the possible political fall-out.
- The weaker power may try to draw leverage from:
  - (i) bilateral alliances with other major powers,
  - (ii) association in common cause with other small and middle-sized powers (e.g. Philippines in ASEAN) against the superior adversary; and
  - (iii) world public opinion in favour of the "underdog".

This paper shows that both countries realize the utility of the confidence building process.