

Prior Notification of Major Military Movements

In accordance with the Final Recommendations of the Helsinki Consultations, the participating States *studied* the question of prior notification of major military movements as a measure to strengthen confidence.

Accordingly, the participating States recognize that they *may*, at their own discretion and with a view to contributing to confidence building, notify their major military movements. ...

Other Confidence-Building Measures

The participating States recognize that there are other means by which their common objectives can be promoted.

In particular, they will, with due regard to reciprocity and with a view to better mutual understanding, promote exchanges by invitation among their military personnel, including visits by military delegations.

In order to make a fuller contribution to their common objective of confidence building, the participating States, when conducting their military activities in the area covered by the provisions for the prior notification of major military manoeuvres, will duly take into account and respect this objective.

They also recognize that the experience gained by the implementation of the provisions set forth above, together with further efforts, could lead to developing and enlarging measures aimed at strengthening confidence.

Questions Relating to Disarmament

The participating States recognize the interest of all of them in efforts aimed at lessening military confrontation and promoting disarmament which are designed to complement political detente in Europe and to strengthen their security. ... (Emphasis added.)

There can be little doubt that the Helsinki CBMs are modest. They are voluntary, binding only in a broad political sense and address only a few very basic military concerns. As a practical matter, the Helsinki CBMs deal only with

large-scale military manoeuvres of over 25,000 personnel, calling for 21 days notice *if possible*. The pre-notification of smaller exercises is totally voluntary. The exchange of observers is also voluntary and to be guided by a principle of reciprocity. Some critics have focused unduly on the voluntary nature of these Confidence-Building Measures. While it may be an overstatement to say that CBMs *must* be established on a voluntary basis, the nature of the enterprise does place a real premium on voluntarism (i.e. "confidence cannot be coerced or forced"). It is also fair to say that while the CBMs contained in the Helsinki Final Act are very modest, the Confidence-Building idea was, at that point, a unique and tentative first step and as such probably had to be modest. The expectation was that more adventuresome and extensive CBMs would (might) follow on the basis of experience gained from the Final Act's modest beginning. As we will see, the potential for CBMs (and CSBMs) extends significantly beyond but builds upon the Helsinki CBMs. Therefore, the Helsinki CBMs are part of a larger process that stretches through the Belgrade follow-up conference to Madrid and beyond to the Conference on Disarmament in Europe. It is simply *not* appropriate to dismiss the Helsinki Confidence-Building Measures for not being what they were never intended to be. They were neither designed nor expected to seriously constrain military behaviour nor were they intended to transform the adversarial relationship between East and West in Europe. It is important that one remember this when assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the Confidence-Building concept.

In pragmatic terms, an obvious way of evaluating the Helsinki CBMs is to examine the performance of the CSCE participant States according to the criteria established in the Final Act. Have they lived up to these admittedly modest undertakings? Johan Holst has looked at this question in an extensive analysis that examines the record of implementation from 1975 to 1982. According to Holst:

the Eastern states adhere strictly to the notification period of 21 days, that is also the pattern for Western manoeuvres in the Central Front. However, Norway has adopted the practice of normally notifying manoeuvres 30 days in advance. The neutral and non-aligned (NNA) states also tend to extend the notification time ...

