

than a direct transplant of institutions as the initial focus. It allows for differentiation in sub-regional contexts and therefore their distinct security approaches. It deliberately “envisioned a more gradual approach to developing multilateral institutions, recognized the value of existing bilateral arrangements, and encouraged ad hoc, informal dialogues (habits of dialogues), and inclusive participation until conditions mature for more formal institution-building.”¹² And it recognizes the merits of both governmental, Track-I and non-governmental, Track-II activities. The Track-II approach is particularly valuable in that it can serve as a sounding board for new ideas. It also encourages interaction between representatives of non-like-minded countries with one another. It moves thinking ahead where official dialogues are absent.

Confidence Building

Confidence building both as a process and product (CBMs) remains an important element in multilateral cooperative security. The recently concluded Shanghai Agreement and Delhi Agreement demonstrate how confidence building has been able to achieve where distrust, hostility, and open confrontation failed: namely, mutually beneficial peace, security, and stability. Particularly important are the two agreements’ emphasis on confidence building and transparency in the military field, a concept that was still alien to Chinese, Soviet/Russian, and Indian strategic thinking not a long while ago. To some extent, it can be suggested what James Macintosh terms the “security management fatigue” has prompted leaders in these countries to seek alternatives in preference to the status quo.¹³ In any event, the two, and especially the Shanghai Agreement, provide a welcome addition to our current understanding of what confidence building is, how it works, and under what conditions. In the Asia-Pacific context, the process of confidence building is well under way, although one should take note the fact that not until the early 1990s have there emerged a number of proposals for regional security frameworks and only since then has there been a general trend toward discussing how confidence building can be usefully applied in promoting cooperation on regional security issues. Today, there are a multitude of security dialogues at various levels, or what may be called “multiplex,” “multi-layered,” or “multifaceted” structures aimed at confidence building.¹⁴ Given their relatively recent nature (compare, for example, with the CSCE/OSCE process that has been more than twenty years in the making), it is understandable that Asia-Pacific confidence building remains at the stage of formulating and implementing CBMs to manage existing and/or potential conflicts, but the very process (e.g., ARF, and various ISG workshops) is clearly in the interest of regional peace, security, and stability.

Transparency

Transparency constitutes another important element of confidence building. As Alan Crawford has suggested, the concept of transparency can be both narrow, focusing

¹² Ibid.

¹³ James Macintosh, *Confidence Building in the Arms Control Process: A Transformation View*. Arms Control and Disarmament Studies, No.2 (Ottawa: The Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, October 1996).

¹⁴ Paul M. Evans, “The Prospects for Multilateral Security Co-operation in the Asia/Pacific Region,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 18:3 (September 1995), pp.201-217.