

driven by more compelling motives.”⁴²

CBMs in the Middle East

During the Middle East Peace Process, Canada tabled a paper on the subject of naval CBMs.⁴³ The paper examined theoretical and practical aspects of select naval CBMs within the MEPP. Specifically, it looked at the feasibility of introducing a structure of “Incidents at Sea” agreements between various Middle East countries and of establishing a coordination organization to facilitate non-political activities at sea such as search and rescue.

As the paper notes, naval CBMs are a relatively new and largely untried means of reducing tension between the naval forces of states, and therefore there are few case studies upon which to build a convincing argument for either probable success or failure of specific measures.⁴⁴ However, many of the evaluative criteria listed in Chapter III could be applied to these CBMs. For example, such measures should bound or minimize the threats, reduce suffering or death of military personnel or civilians, and be adequately verifiable. The exchanges among naval staff associated with implementing the CBMs should provide a forum for communication. The CBMs should not create a false sense of security, they would provide building blocks for follow-on, more comprehensive agreements, and they would unquestionably increase transparency, enhance security, and contribute to regional stability.

In terms of the Middle East Peace Process generally, while some have characterized the current situation as a failure, it might more accurately be described as a lull. The change of government in Israel and the uncertainty it has engendered are at the core of the many breakdowns in the talks. However recent meetings between Prime Minister Netanyahu and Palestinian Leader Yasser Arafat have set the stage for renewed negotiations with the Palestine National Authority on the redeployment of Israeli troops from Hebron and other issues.

Some positive developments have already occurred. Israel has agreed to partially ease the closure of the West Bank and Gaza by allowing 50,000 Palestinians to enter Israel to work and to participate in the formation of a joint Israeli-Palestinian monitoring group to oversee the

⁴² Edward N. Luttwak, “A Post-Heroic Military Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 1996, p. 40.

⁴³ “Naval Confidence Building Measures in a Regional Context: Prospects for the Middle East,” a paper commissioned for consideration of the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group. The paper was prepared by The Centre for Foreign Policy Studies at Dalhousie University. [no authors listed] November 1993.

⁴⁴ The paper notes that many Middle East states have ratified the 1948 Convention on the International Maritime Organization, the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, and the 1972 Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea.