

managed to negotiate their way through a series of small disputes connected with their peace treaty. In Latin America, specific sub-regional concerns with the cross-border consequences of the drug trade or the damaging effects of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons have given rise to sub-regional initiatives (none of which have advanced very far yet), but all of which address issues that are not part of the traditional "Northern" agenda. These experiences, limited though they may be, suggest that regional actors are quite capable of developing security-building measures that respond to their needs, even if various regional and domestic constraints prevent these (for the moment) from evolving further.

Conclusion

In light of these reflections, it is possible to make four overarching observations or "recommendations" for efforts to advance the NACD agenda in different regions. The first would be that *the potential for progress is enhanced when one finds "points of resonance" or indigenous cultural expressions or experiences to build upon*. Proposals that situate genuine policy departures in a longer tradition of multilateralism in which many or all states (usually within a region) have participated enjoy a greater chance of success than those that are cast as attempts to "export" the Western experience. For example, efforts to promote what some carelessly called a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Asia (CSCA), or to "teach" (and preach) the lessons of Western arms control to the Middle Eastern participants in the Arms Control and Regional Security process were seen as patronizing or insensitive to local circumstances. On the other hand, when local leaders could promote the ASEAN Regional Forum as a genuine expression of an "ASEAN way," that incorporated some of the traditions it had developed, it was more successful (however strained the analogy might have been).²⁸ Sometimes (such as in the CSCA case) this is merely a question of terminology; other times, however, the basic *modus operandi* of security-building processes may also differ.

For example, the move towards consensus methods of decision-making in a wide range of multilateral forums can be presented as a generalized influence from other cultures on Western diplomatic practices. Of course, its use in such things as the Non-Proliferation Treaty extension process was certainly not neutral, but it was a departure from a Western majoritarian impulse. Likewise, the Ottawa Process (and coalition) from which the international treaty banning anti-personnel land mines emerged illustrates a principle of open participation for "like-minded" states via a non-hierarchical process that sidestepped consensus, while still maximizing opportunities for participation and including a great deal of input from civil society. Abandoning a strict preference for formal treaty-based mechanisms, or for comprehensively verifiable arrangements, might be the best starting point for NACD processes in some regional/cultural contexts, and be in the best interests of states that would otherwise insist on such measures. An over-obsession with transparency and certainty, amplified by the nuclear weapons control experience, is a particularly Western trait that may hinder the realization of real improvements in regional security in different parts of the world.²⁹

²⁸ See, for details, Michael Leifer, *The ASEAN Regional Forum: Extending ASEAN's Model of Regional Security*, Adelphi Paper 302 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1996).

²⁹ Of course, there is also the risk that such agreements might give rise to future compliance disputes, depending on the nature of the measure agreed upon.