

meaningful but modest attempts to establish the basis for progressively more complex arrangements that one day might acquire a multilateral character.

Ms. Heppell concluded by stressing that bilateral CBM arrangements were particularly useful for dealing with the issue-specific nature of relations in North-East Asia. The complex relations amongst these states made multilateral approaches much more difficult to execute. However, even the bilateral route could pose problems as each successful arrangement could upset relations with other neighbours. The one multilateral CBM opportunity that offered real prospects of interest and success was an arrangement organized around the issue of nuclear waste disposal.

The discussion of confidence building approaches in the North Asian region touched on a number of issues that were relevant to Ms. Selin's presentation, as well. There was general concern, expressed by many participants, that the confidence building idea was not well understood by many policy makers in Asia. This handicapped efforts to explore the potential of the approach. The observation was made again that many Asian decision makers have a very strong sense of nationalism and the complete sovereignty of the state which further impairs the possibility of using confidence building and many other security management approaches.

Several participants were interested in exploring whether it was possible to move bilateral efforts into a multilateral forum. Perhaps existing regional organizations could support the development of multilateral confidence building agreements. Others felt that it was most appropriate to start at the bilateral level and gradually expand as initial efforts bore fruit. At least one participant, however, argued that starting at the bilateral level risked exposing too many sharp differences between each pair of participants. If small groups of states attempted to develop basic confidence building arrangements, they might be able to find sufficient common ground to overcome this type of problem. Of course, this might not help very much in addressing the bilateral problems that underlay the relationship. One participant wondered if it wasn't possible to develop a broad multilateral CBM programme where each participating state would adopt only those measures it felt comfortable with.

The discussion shifted to the consideration of who might participate in a multilateral security arrangement. Some analysts have suggested a very small group including only the main regional actors (China, Japan, and the two Koreas) while others have suggested a somewhat expanded base including the United States and Russia as well as, perhaps, Taiwan. Some have also suggested that Canada might play a role in a regional organization. It was useful to remember that smaller states such as South Korea might be overwhelmed by big states (China and Japan) if the composition of the group was too small. Adding more participants would create a more diverse array of states of varying power and influence. This was an issue that required a good deal more thought and research effort.