

As a first step toward developing a better appreciation of confidence building, the original 1985 study sought to impose some order on the sizeable literature of the day by developing discrete ways of organizing ideas about confidence building. Four separate analytic perspectives capable of characterizing what seemed to be distinctive aspects of confidence building emerged in that study, reflecting to some degree the diverse approaches evident in the literature. These approaches entailed looking at:

- (1) Historical and contemporary non-European agreements exhibiting confidence building characteristics;
- (2) CSCE/OSCE confidence building negotiations;
- (3) Functional categories of CBMs; and
- (4) Definitions of confidence building measures.

The continued post-1985 use of these four distinctive perspectives by the author was intended to help produce a more comprehensive appreciation of the confidence building phenomenon, particularly when combined with an awareness of the literature's broad analytic weaknesses identified in the second half of the original study. Chapter Seven, for instance, argued that the professional literature of the day typically failed to address seriously the nature of Soviet military capabilities and intentions as well as failed to explain how the confidence building process might work.

Although it was only imperfectly grasped at the time, this effort to progressively refine the four distinctive perspectives and to examine process issues (as recommended in the study's assessment of analytic short-comings) constituted the first hesitant step toward exploring the important causal relationship between the use of CBMs and improvements in security relationships.

It was hoped that the combined use of these four distinct approaches in subsequent work,

adjusted to accommodate insights flowing from the analysis of the literature's so-called generic analytic flaws, would produce a rich, consistent, and comprehensive appreciation of confidence building; a synergistic product that would exceed the sum of its analytic parts.

However, this did not happen. Over the course of time, some of these approaches have proven to be more successful than others but there has been relatively little synergy. In addition, the insights derived from examining the literature's generic analytic flaws failed to inform the further development of these four approaches to any great extent, either in the author's own work or that of other analysts. Complicating matters, the overestimated independence of the four perspectives meant that problems with one — the definition perspective, in particular — could influence the others in negative and unanticipated ways, locking them all into a conservative understanding of confidence building.

Perhaps the most immediately useful of the four perspectives has been the typology of categories, while the most challenging has been the pursuit of a general definition of confidence building. The pursuit of the latter has continued long after the completion of the initial study and has provoked a variety of insights into the nature of confidence building. Indeed, this pursuit combined with the further exploration of the causal and process issues associated with the second generic analytic flaw identified in the original study have together developed gradually into what might be considered a distinct fifth approach: the construction of a general explanation of the confidence building process. The transformation view of confidence building is a direct product of this fifth approach.

A brief assessment follows of each of the four initial perspectives and the two generic analytic flaws outlined in the 1985 study; this is done both in terms of what they attempted to accomplish twelve years ago as well as in terms of how sound they really were, viewed from the critical vantage point of 1996. The lessons to be learned from this