

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

This study has examined Confidence-Building from a number of perspectives in an attempt to understand its limitations and its potential. The tentative conclusion is that "Confidence-Building", as a distinctive approach to arms control, may have considerable potential in some applications but our current understanding of its nature and limits is seriously constrained by three basic problems. These problems –

- (1) great definitional imprecision (one could even say confusion) and variation in delimiting *what* Confidence-Building is;
- (2) the failure to employ an appropriately realistic understanding of the Soviet conventional military "threat" in the dominant substantive area of application (Eurocentric CBMs); and
- (3) a consistent failure to provide a plausible psychological or political explanation of *how* the Confidence-Building process actually works

combine to produce an understanding of Confidence-Building that is confused and analytically very weak. If CBMs are to be employed effectively as a variety of arms control approach, these problems will have to be addressed and, to the extent possible, corrected.

In an attempt to address the problem of definitional confusion, we looked at the concept of Confidence-Building from the perspective of a number of different applications: potential historical examples; the Confidence-Building Measures from the CSCE's Helsinki Final Act; the proposed Associated Measures from the Mutual (and Balanced) Force Reduction negotiations; specific definitions and sets of categories from the Confidence-Building literature; and actual CBM proposals. In the process of doing this, we saw just how great a variety of understandings there were. "Confidence-Building" is a significantly more variegated concept than is commonly supposed.

Looking first at historical examples (Chapter Two), we discovered that many international agreements appear to be the functional equivalent of Confidence-Building Measures. This is certainly true of all the so-called "Hot Line" agreements (the American, British and French arrangements with the Soviet Union). It is

obviously the case for the Agreement on Measures to Reduce the Risk of Outbreak of Nuclear War and the Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas (the United States and the Soviet Union) as well as agreements on the prevention of accidental nuclear war (both France and Britain with the Soviet Union). A number of naval arms control agreements also seem to be CBMs (for instance, the Rush-Bagot Treaty, the Chilean-Argentine treaty, the Greco-Turkish treaty, the 1936 London Naval Treaty and some Black Sea agreements). The 1975 Egyptian-Israeli Accord on the Sinai contains a number of very specific conventional military Confidence-Building Measures. The Spitsbergen and the Aaland Island non-fortification agreements are certainly good examples, as well. The ABM Treaty is clearly an example as is the associated memorandum of understanding establishing the Standing Consultative Commission. The agreement not to interfere with national technical means of verification (in the SALT I Interim Agreement) is undeniably a Confidence-Building Measure. A reasonable (if not wholly persuasive) argument can also be made for the consideration of all denuclearization and demilitarization treaties and for the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We could also include proposals that, while never actually adopted, still constitute legitimate *examples* of CBMs. The 1930 Draft Convention of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, the 1955 "Open Skies" proposal, schemes mentioned at the 1958 Geneva Surprise Attack Conference and the Rapacki Plans all contain clear-cut CBMs. Without using deliberately restrictive criteria, all of these undertakings appear to qualify as reasonable CBM examples. It is noteworthy that these applications cover strategic nuclear and naval arms control issues as well as land-based, conventional military arrangements. Although these agreements and undertakings perform what appear to be the functions of Confidence-Building, most discussions of CBMs are far more restrictive.

The concept of Confidence-Building owes a great deal to the Helsinki Final Act. The CBMs outlined in that document are often treated as

