

are based on its self-definition as a secular democratic state.²¹ By contrast, Ben-Dor notes that there is a great difference in perceptions of (and the importance of) socio-political violence in different Middle Eastern states, with countries such as Syria being regarded as more "violence-prone" (in the sense of a willingness to resort to force to resolve disputes) than Egypt, in part because of their different state-building experiences. Virtually throughout the Middle East, however, a:

culture of planning for war, being prepared for violence, and not having trust or confidence in the other side's military capabilities or intentions, prevailed...The educational system was devoted to bringing up children and students with the fact that they would be forced to go into combat in the future.²²

Finally, several cases highlighted the concrete institutional expressions of these various cultural elements. In Latin America, for example, the relatively weak traditions of accountability and compromise that emerge from this cultural matrix exert a strong influence on the NACD agenda, and make Western notions such as transparency, compliance monitoring or verification, extremely difficult to translate into practice. In China, the closed, secretive and highly-concentrated policy-making system reflects not only the practices of the Chinese Communist Party, but a "cultural tradition of power bestowed to an idealized, benevolent and authoritarian leadership, with little open debate or broad channels of participation in the policymaking process."²³ In this case, it makes the evolution of NACD policy particularly dependent on changes in the world-views held by a small core leadership. It should be noted, however, that sometimes this might actually facilitate agreement, since the Western tradition of democratic openness can often lead to political immobilism, and the capture of policy processes by special interests.²⁴ Nonetheless, similar weak traditions of transparency also create difficulties throughout Southeast Asia, where the lack of openness means that in most states in the region very little information is available on military spending, and tough restrictions exist on investigating national security issues. In the Middle East, the question of transparency is also amplified by the traditional need for military secrecy in circumstances of war and conflict.

Probably the most important element of domestic political culture is the nature of civil-military relations, and again the case of Latin America highlights clearly that the particular configuration of civil-military relations can create serious difficulties for advancing the NACD agenda. For Hal Klepak, it represents the overwhelming factor, since despite the transition to democracy, the armed forces retain a powerful *droit de regard* over all aspects of foreign and security policy, and have great influence over budgetary matters. As he notes, the oft-cited expression -- *acoto pero no cumpro* -- which translates loosely as: "I understand and accept what the authorities have ordered but I simply choose not to comply," creates serious obstacles for transparency, or for compliance monitoring of NACD agreements. It also makes it

²¹ Latham, 114.

²² Fakhr, 183.

²³ Yuan, 84.

²⁴ Steven Miller and Michael Krepon, for example, have argued that the system often permits defence "hawks" to block arms control progress - an argument that could be made about the failure of the U.S. to sign on to the recent anti-personnel land mines treaty. Steven Miller, "Politics over Promise: Domestic Impediments to Arms Control," *International Security*, 8:4 (Spring 1984); Michael Krepon, *Strategic Stalemate: Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control in American Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 108-145.