

control process (although it built upon and reacted to the legacy of pre-1945 attempts to limit or control armaments).³ Together these experiences, and the range of cultural (historical, political, strategic and diplomatic) influences that informed them, created a distinct matrix of beliefs and dispositions towards NACD issues.

In this chapter, we seek to highlight the ways in which a specific Western and American understanding of how to deal with external threats has shaped the NACD policies and practices of states, and helped to define the Western "security culture." We argue that the security-building practices of the West are rooted in powerfully resonating beliefs, or basic mental images, regarding threat and danger as well as appropriate responses. These images resonate not so much because they accurately describe reality, make predictions, or prescribe effective action, but because they "fit" within existing cultural and social understandings. In turn, these culturally-inflected images determine not only how the world is understood and interpreted, but how "interests" are defined and pursued. Significant policy shifts are thus connected to significant shifts in interpretive frameworks. To the extent that this is true, a research focus on "objective" interests and threats will provide only a limited insight into the logic of contemporary Western NACD policy. What is needed as well is a research programme that highlights how shared images provided the structures of meaning within which Western diplomats and policy-makers operate.

More specifically, this chapter develops the following three propositions. First, that Western approaches to NACD issues (including both threat perceptions and policy prescriptions) are shaped by (and drew upon) a constellation of enduring and widely-shared beliefs, traditions, attitudes and symbols. Second, that these beliefs and traditions were made concrete and explicit in attempts to cope with the dilemmas and risks of the nuclear era, producing several central "norms" of East-West NACD practice:

- a belief in the necessity of "rational" nuclear deterrence coupled with an acknowledgement of the non-utility of major war and the mutuality of security;
- a commitment to an ongoing step-by-step negotiating process that put a premium on technocratic, and managerial negotiating strategies and evaluations of security;
- an emphasis on formal negotiated "contractual" arms control agreements that incorporated such ideas as "balance" or "parity";
- a conviction that transparency and robust verification or compliance-monitoring measures were needed;
- a willingness to engage in confidence- and security-building processes that might transform threat perceptions and indeed political relations.

Third, that in the aftermath of the Cold War the transformation of the dominant Western discourses of threat has altered the broader context within which Western NACD culture is located. As a result, contemporary Western NACD culture has partially evolved to encompass the following norms as "amendments" of those enumerated above:

- a greater focus on proliferation as the principal threat to global security, and a commitment to non-proliferation rather than global disarmament;

³ For details on pre-1945 arms control, see the section on "Historical Dimensions to 1945" of Richard Dean Burns, ed., *Encyclopedia of Arms Control and Disarmament*, vol. II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993).