

PREFACE

Canada has been an active participant in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) since its inception. The ARF, in Canada's view, makes a crucial contribution to the creation of a security community in the Asia Pacific region, one that recognizes the shared security interests of participating countries and in which countries work cooperatively to advance those interests in a pragmatic and meaningful manner. By promoting the development of a sense of community and of community values, the ARF helps ensure a peaceful, stable environment in Asia Pacific, where open and secure sea lanes and skies permit economic development and fruitful international cooperation to address transnational problems.

Canada is an Asia Pacific country with a long history of involvement in confidence building processes in other regions of the world, and participates fully in similar, more recent activities in this region. As such, Canada is convinced that promoting a peaceful and resilient security community in Asia Pacific must be founded on the development of mutual confidence among participating states. It is for this reason that Canada has welcomed the ongoing discussions on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) within the ARF. The Inter-sessional Support Group (ISG) on CBMs is well-placed to provide Ministers with important policy recommendations. We also regard the thoughtful agenda prepared by the co-chairs of the Beijing ISG Meeting on CBMs (6-8 March 1997) as particularly positive.

In Canada's view, to have maximum benefit, security-related CBMs should be reciprocal in nature and all parties need to demonstrate good faith in the confidence building process. We believe that bilateral, regional and global CBMs can complement one another; together, they create the synergy to promote greater confidence in the Asia Pacific community. We note in particular the recent Sino-Indian and "Shanghai" Agreements, which are very positive developments in this context.

To assist in the work of the Beijing ISG Meeting and, more generally, of the ARF on this important issue, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade initiated a background study of confidence building in the context of the ARF. This study explores in particular the important role that bilateral CBM agreements can play, with special attention on recent developments.

This report is being made available to assist officials and researchers in their work on this subject, as part of the Department's policy to share the results of independent research undertaken by the Verification Research Program. The views presented in this report are the author's alone, and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department or of the Government of Canada.