

developments in determining the new architecture of regional security."¹⁰ Most analysts agree, however, on the importance of at least coming to terms with the cultural dimension of international politics, and in particular security policies.

But between the poles of "culture is everything" and "culture is irrelevant" lies a wide middle ground in which a whole host of "cultural" factors may be at work, in both a negative and a positive way. For this analysis, "the simple question 'does culture matter?' should be replaced by a more fruitful line of enquiry, 'under what special conditions and to what extent does culture matter?'"¹¹ Hence the scope of this analysis is both broader and narrower than that of most of the authors mentioned above. On the one hand, its goal is to consider all of the dimensions on which cultural elements can be important to multilateral dialogues on international peace and security, ranging from the broadest impact of political and historical cultures, to the most specific manifestations in negotiating practices and procedures. On the other hand, its goal is to focus all of these elements onto one specific topic area, which could be called "security culture": the cultural dimension of multilateral security-building and arms control (broadly defined) dialogues. The overall purpose is to develop a coherent and policy-relevant framework that would help to link positions concerning issues of non-proliferation and arms control with particular diplomatic, historical, strategic or political cultural orientations that could have an impact on the development of the arms control and security-building dialogue in particular regional contexts or issue areas.

The purpose (and structure) of this introductory chapter is two-fold. First, drawing upon the various literatures that examine the cultural dimensions of international politics, it will elaborate the various concepts of "culture" (diplomatic, political, and strategic) that are relevant to multilateral security issues. Secondly, it will bring these elements together in a template that serves to define more clearly the concept of a "security culture," and outlines the possible cultural dimensions of arms control, non-proliferation and confidence-building efforts, as a basis for the more focused explorations in the case studies that follow. The first case study, which is a sort of "backdrop" study for the subsequent cases, examines the contemporary *acquis* of arms control and non-proliferation instruments and concepts. Its goal is to demonstrate how some of the achievements and methods of the East-West arms control legacy were (and were not) affected by what could be considered "cultural" factors. It thus sets the stage for the non-Western cases, and provides the rationale for why these somewhat nebulous factors must be taken into consideration in other contexts, either when obstacles emerge to the "translation" of the East-West experience, or when multilateral dialogues cut across important cultural and historical divides.

Some Conceptual Caveats

Before tackling this, however, some clarifications and caveats must be offered. First, none of the contributors claims that a focus on cultural elements will provide a Holy Grail (to use a culturally-bound reference) or a panacea to the difficulties that are encountered in multilateral dialogues on international

¹⁰ Desmond Ball, "Strategic Culture in the Asia-Pacific Region," *Security Studies*, 3:1 (1993), 44. Zartman echoes this when he claims that "culture is indeed relevant to the understanding of the negotiation process—every bit as relevant as breakfast and to much the same extent...even the best understanding of any such effect is tautological, its measure vague, and its role in the process basically epiphenomenal." I. William Zartman, "A Skeptic's View," in Faure and Rubin, 17.

¹¹ Ole Elgström, "National Culture and International Negotiations," *Cooperation and Conflict*, 29:3 (1994), 295.