

The validity of these assumptions have not been rigorously tested through significant empirical research. The assumptions also appear to denigrate the role of good diplomacy as a possible counterweight to such asymmetry. Diplomatic efforts, where adroitly used, may not only serve to offset the deleterious consequences of such asymmetries, but they may also trigger the political will necessary to begin CBMs in the first place, and to pursue them to mutually beneficial conclusion. With this in mind, this paper hypothesizes that it may be possible to develop practical and useful CBMs in significantly asymmetrical environments, albeit under unique circumstances and through select diplomatic, political and other means. Through empirical analysis of Philippine-Chinese relations, this paper will attempt to explore some of those preconditions for the creation of practical and useful CBMs in such environments.

Specifically, the paper shall seek to:

- give a brief historical background of the territorial and maritime resource dispute between the Philippines and China;
- examine the measures taken by both sides, at bilateral as well as multilateral arena to build mutual trust and contain the conflict through confidence-building measures;
- study how the asymmetry in the power relations of the two sides have had an effect on the CBM process, particularly from the Philippine side, and
- assess the effectivity of such measures for the Philippine side.

The study is, however, limited by its emphasis on the Philippine perspective of the dispute rather than giving equal attention to the Chinese side. The fact that the process is ongoing and proceeds under a cloud of sensitivity and confidentiality also restrains one from making premature comments and recommendations. Moreover, the main purpose of the study is to help address practical problems, rather than elucidate theoretical issues, therefore the inadequacy of reference to and linkage with the rich body of scholarly work on the subject.

CONFIDENCE BUILDING: DEFINITIONS AND TYPOLOGIES

The term "confidence building" still escapes accurate or universal definition in the security studies literature. It is European in origin, having emerged from the experience of European conflict management and first appearing as part of the language of the Helsinki Final Accord where confidence building measures were referred to not only as military actions, but that which may also take the form of economic, social and cultural activities. This position is based on the premise that differentiated forms of cooperation help increase common understanding, as well as minimize the danger arising from disputes by laying emphasis on the benefits and opportunities arising from other aspects of relations. Other sources use the term confidence and security building measures (CSBMs), defining them as formal and informal measures, whether unilateral, bilateral or multilateral, that address, prevent or resolve uncertainties among states, including both military and