IX.   Conclusions: Security Culture and the Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament Agenda

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Introduction[1]

This project began from the observation, made by a wide range of practitioners, that the new, multilateral, arena of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament (NACD) had been complicated by several elements that had not been part of the European or East-West arms control process. From both an academic and a policy perspective, this raised some interesting questions, such as:

> • will future NACD agreements include things like quantitative or qualitative ceilings, formal verification measures, legally-binding treaties, confidence- and security-building measures, openness and transparency, or are these notions peculiar to the Western strategic tradition?
> • will the *process* of security-building and arms control differ radically from the East-West experience in different regional contexts?
> • will concepts and underlying ideas such as trust, prestige, parity, mutual deterrence and crisis stability translate differently among different groups of states or regions?
> • are some of these basic concepts invested with different meanings in different cultures and civilizational traditions?

There are a whole host of reasons why the transition to more multilateral (global or regional), arms control processes is difficult: there are more actors whose conflicting interests must be accommodated; the regional conflict contexts vary widely and are seldom dominated by an equal bilateral relationship or a hegemonic actor; large differences in wealth result in great disparities in states' levels of military development and in the size and sophistication of their military establishments; and much less consensus exists on the nature of security challenges in the post-Cold War world. This project focused on one aspect of this transformation in security relations: the impact of "culture" on multilateral security-building processes, particularly those associated with NACD issues. In doing so, the various authors do not claim that it is the most important explanatory element, but merely that cultural elements shaped (often unconsciously) the East-West arms control process, that cross-cultural factor cannot be ignored in other contexts and processes, and that different sets of beliefs and traditions may prove to be crucial factors in some of the contemporary multilateral security building processes that are unfolding around the world.

Focusing on the cultural dimension of any social phenomenon presents special difficulties, all of which are present in the international security arena. "Culture" is often deployed in a casual manner to explain all residual phenomenon that do not seem at first glance to have a "rational" explanation. Culture is also often used to amplify differences, or (by participants themselves) as a form of resistance to pressures from stronger actors or from "outsiders." Finally, culture is often used confusingly to cover phenomena that range from micro-interactions between individuals, to macro-level "clashes of civilizations." In order

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