

importance of such concepts as "transparency" in security matters.⁵ One step further up the ladder of generality, deep cultural considerations (such as the so-called "Asian way") can be used to explain the framing of security issues and a preference for hierarchical versus egalitarian ideas of regional security architectures, or can be invoked to explain the different interpretations of such concepts as a "common European home."⁶ At the most general level, cultures or "civilizations" can be invoked as the basic units of interaction in world politics, and the "clash of civilizations" as the most important future challenge for global security.⁷

The dominant assumption is that cross-cultural differences not only reflect differences on specific policy issues (although that is part of it), but also often reflect more fundamental differences concerning motivations, events and their contexts that result from different philosophical, ethical or cultural traditions. Reaching security-building agreements across the cultural divides in international relations may thus involve a process of mutual education and dialogue, and ultimately of transformation of perceptions and *weltanschauungen*. But *exactly* what role cultural elements play in national and international security policies is not clear. It is often impossible to demonstrate that cultural factors, and not some other "variables," were responsible for a particular position or outcome; neither is it the case that cultural elements operate in a vacuum, as they are usually entangled with a host of other factors operating simultaneously.⁸

These analyses result in conflicting and contradictory conclusions about the role of cultural elements in national and international security. On the one hand, people such as Raymond Cohen or Elizabeth Kier argue "that cross-cultural antimonies between the parties may affect the course and outcome of negotiations," or that "culture is important in explaining choices [for example] between offensive and defensive military doctrines."⁹ On the other hand, people such as Desmond Ball or William Zartman conclude that "cultural factors will be less important than economic, technological and strategic

⁵ Richard Price and Nina Tannenwald, "Norms and Deterrence: The Nuclear and Chemical Weapons Taboos," in Katzenstein, *Culture of National Security*, 114-152. See also Richard Price, "A Genealogy of the Chemical Weapons Taboo," *International Organization*, 49:1 (Winter 1995), 73-103. On transparency, see Shannon Selin's observations in *Asia Pacific Arms Buildups Part Two: Prospects for Control*, working paper no. 7 (Vancouver: Institute of International Relations, UBC, 1994), 25.

⁶ On the "common European home," see Paul Chilton, *Security Metaphors: Cold War Discourses from Containment to the Common House* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996); Chilton and M. Ilyin, "Metaphor in Political Discourse: The Case of the 'Common European House,'" *Discourse and Society*, 4:1 (1993), 7-31. For an overview of the debate on the Asian way, see Alan Dupont, "Is There an Asian Way?," *Survival*, 38:2 (Summer 1996), 13-33; Amitav Acharya, "Multilateralism: Is There an Asia Pacific Way?" paper prepared for the conference on National Strategies in the Asia-Pacific, 28-29 March 1996.

⁷ Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, 72:3 (Summer 1993), 22-49.

⁸ Michael Mazaar, "Culture and International Relations: A Review Essay," *Washington Quarterly*, 19:2 (1996), 188.

⁹ Raymond Cohen, "An Advocate's View," in Guy Olivier Faure and Jeffrey Rubin, eds., *Culture and Negotiation: The Resolution of Water Disputes* (London: Sage, 1993), 22; Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and French Military Doctrine Before World War II," in Katzenstein, *Culture and National Security*, 187.