

changes in CSCE-related security thinking that occurred in the 1986-1992 period. To a large extent, these changes predated the collapse and are more closely associated with the Soviet initiatives of 7 December 1988 (significant unilateral force cuts in East Germany announced by Gorbachev at the United Nations) and 6 March 1989 (Shevardnadze's presentation of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) position proposing very substantial conventional force cuts at the opening of the CFE talks), as well as the unification of Germany (unofficially, 9 November 1989) and the collapse of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (25 February 1991).

Clearly, Gorbachev and some of his key aides made a difference — and a significant one, at that — by proposing force reductions to equal levels set less than existing NATO force levels. This amounts to the “leap of faith” type of initiative noted in the portrayal of supporting conditions.

However, simply assuming that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the main reason for security ideas changing in many CSCE states confuses an *incentive for change* (a triggering event) that can have a variable impact on relations for the *process that both facilitates and structures change*. Just as important, from a practical point of view, the promise of force reductions, the collapse of the WTO, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union were as likely to destabilize relations in Europe as they were to lead to a wholesale positive change. Fear, suspicion, and new barriers to improved security relations might just as easily have ensued.

Thus, these events are not sufficient by themselves to account for the readiness of most leaders and their peoples to rapidly shift their thinking about security. They were *ready* to adopt new conceptions of security. Confidence building helped to prepare them and then helped to structure the changes. Thus, it played a *critical mediating role*.

6. Peter M. Haas, “Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination,” *International Organization* Vol. 46, No. 1 (Winter 1992), p. 3. Haas also notes that the following, additional characteristics are typical of an epistemic community:

“[The members] share intersubjective understandings; have a shared way of knowing; have shared patterns of reasoning; have a policy project drawing on shared values, shared causal beliefs, and the use of shared discursive practices; and have a shared commitment to the

application and production of knowledge.” (*Ibid.*, Note 5, p. 3.)

Note the very strong emphasis on *shared*.

No attempt is made here to review the epistemic community literature in any depth nor to discuss the approach in any detail. The material presented in the text provides only a rough and ready appreciation of some highlights of the epistemic community approach.

For those interested in examining the epistemic literature in some detail, the following constitutes a useful starting point: Peter M. Haas, editor, “Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination,” (special issue), *International Organization* Vol. 46, No. 1 (Winter 1992) (See, especially, Haas, “Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination,” Emanuel Adler, “The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control,” and Adler and Haas, “Conclusion: Epistemic Communities, World Order, and the Creation of a Reflective Research Program”). For parallel, similar, yet distinctive viewpoints, see; Martha Finnemore, “International Organizations as Teachers of Norms,” *International Organization* Vol. 47, No. 4 (Autumn 1993); (especially) Thomas Risse-Kappen, “Ideas Do Not Float Freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War,” *International Organization* Vol. 48, No. 2 (Spring 1994); and Matthew Evangelista, “The Paradox of State Strength: Transnational Relations, Domestic Structures, and Security Policy in Russia and the Soviet Union,” *International Organization* Vol. 49, No. 1 (Winter 1995). An important early articulation of the epistemic community idea can be found in John Gerard Ruggie, “International Responses to Technology,” *International Organization* Vol. 29, (Summer 1975).

Note that the epistemic community literature overlaps and shares much common intellectual ground with the broader “regime” and “international institutionalization” literature introduced in the next section.

7. Haas, “Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination,” pp. 2-3.

8. Adler and Haas, “Conclusion: Epistemic Communities, World Order, and the Creation of a Reflective Research Program,” p. 368. According to Adler and Haas, this approach attempts “to bridge the gap