The Preconditions of Confidence-Building: Lessons from the European Experience

Cathleen S. Fisher

The dramatic transformation of political relations in Europe and subsequent dismantlement of Cold War military structures in the region has focused international attention on unresolved conflicts elsewhere in the world. The continuing military face-off along the inter-Korean divide, a potential nuclear arms race in South Asia, and simmering rivalries and tensions in the Middle East are but three examples of regional conflicts that may pose significant and unforeseen risks for global security, particularly where one or more parties to a conflict possesses weapons of mass destruction.

Although limitations on military forces may be too ambitious for states locked in age-old cycles of hatred and distrust, more modest precursors to structural arms control, known as confidence-building measures (CBMs), may be feasible. In Europe, CBMs were employed to introduce greater openness, or "transparency," into the military activities of the two alliances.[1] By conveying "credible evidence of the absence of feared threats," measures such as the prenotification and observation of military exercises, secure communication lines, and exchanges of information on military forces or exercises were intended to reduce the incentives for military competition, and to enhance predictability, stability, and trust in East–West relations.[2]

Since the end of the Cold War, interest in confidence-building measures in many regions outside of Europe has grown. Views on what constitutes a CBM, or on the feasibility

---

[1] On confidence-building in the European context and for early conceptual views, see Jonathan Alford, *Confidence-Building Measures in Europe: The Military Aspects*, Adelphi Paper no. 149 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1979); Rolf Berg and Adam-Daniel Rotfeld, *Building Security in Europe: Confidence-Building Measures and the CSCE* (New York: Institute for East–West Security Studies, 1986); R. B. Byers, F. Stephen Larrabee, and Allen Lynch, *Confidence-Building Measures and International Security*, Institute for East–West Monograph Series no. 4 (New York: Institute for East–West Security Studies, 1987); Brian J. Gillian, Alan Crawford, and Kornel Buczek, *Compendium of Confidence-Building Proposals*, 2d ed., Department of National Defence, Canada, Operational Research and Analysis Establishment, Extra-mural Paper no. 45 (Ottawa, 1987); Johan Jorgen Holst, "Confidence-Building Measures: A Conceptual Framework," *Survival* 25, no. 1 (January/February 1983): 2–15; Johan Jørgen Holst and Karen Alette Melander, "European Security and Confidence-Building Measures," *Survival* 19, no. 4 (July/August 1977): 146–154; Karl Kaiser, ed., *Confidence-Building Measures*, Forschungsinstitut der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, no. 28, proceedings of an international symposium in Bonn, 24–27 May 1983 (Bonn: Europa Union-Verlag, 1983); and Stephen Larrabee and Dietrich Stobbe, eds., *Confidence-Building Measures in Europe* (New York: Institute for East–West Security Studies, 1983).

[2] Holst and Melander, "European Security," 147.

of applying various confidence-building tools, nevertheless remain divided. The central issue concerns the broader applicability of measures and lessons extracted from one, perhaps unique historical experience. What conclusions, if any, can we draw from the European experience about the generic preconditions and phases of confidence-building, or about the prospects for regional CBM initiatives?

Views on what constitutes a CBM, or on the feasibility of applying various confidence-building tools, nevertheless remain divided. The central issue concerns the broader applicability of measures and lessons extracted from one, perhaps unique historical experience.

In the European context, confidence-building measures were contained in formal, negotiated agreements and were designed specifically to introduce greater transparency and predictability into the military activities of the two blocs. Some analysts of CBMs in other regions preserve this narrow view of CBMs. Focusing on the application of CBMs in the Middle East, for example, Landau and Levite define CBMs as formal, intentional agreements involving "cooperative measures that enhance openness and transparency in the security realm."[3] Other studies, however, advocate a more expansive definition of confidence-building, according to which economic, political, and cultural tools are viewed as CBMs as well as their more traditional counterparts in the military realm. In this view, many different types of measures may contribute to a broader confidence-building process, whose end result is a general improvement in political relations.[4] Illustrative of this perspective is Cossa's exploration of CBMs in Asia-Pacific, CBMs are seen to comprise unilateral, bilateral, or multilateral measures, both formal or informal

[3] Ariel E. Levite and Emily B. Landau, *Confidence and Security Building Measures in the Middle East*, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies Focus Series no. 1 (Tel Aviv, July 1997), 11. See also Emily Landau, "CBMs in the Middle East: A Conceptual Framework," in Shai Feldman, ed. *Confidence Building and Verification: Prospects in the Middle East*, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994).

[4] For a highly critical view of an expansive definition of CBMs, see Marie-France Dejardins, *Rethinking Confidence-Building Measures*, Adelphi Paper no. 307 (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press/IISS), 7–23. Dejardins notes a tendency among regional security specialists "to rename a disproportionate number of state's initiatives in a wider variety of fields as 'CBMs', or to add 'confidence-building' objectives to an ever-growing number of inter-state activities, and claim this as the development of a confidence-building process." (17) The emphasis has shifted, Dejardins argues, "from enhancing military security to enhancing cooperation," a development that may actually lead states to develop the process at the expense of security.

"that address, prevent or resolve uncertainties among states, including both military and political elements."[5]

Perspectives on whether the 'preconditions' for CBMs can be fulfilled outside of the European context also vary. A skeptical view would argue that the military security measures and tools developed in Europe may not be readily or easily transferred to other regions, or only partially and ineffectually. According to this perspective, CBMs as they were developed in the European context cannot be feasibly applied under the political conditions found in many parts of the developing world, which may be characterized by shifting allegiances, unresolved territorial disputes, political instabilities, and drastic asymmetries in capabilities or geography. In this view, if CBMs are to be useful to regions outside of Europe, they must be tailored specifically to the security concerns and needs of the particular countries involved, and to the unique political, economic, geographic, and military conditions extant in their respective regions.[6]

In the final analysis, there are both compelling practical and theoretical reasons for studying the European experience in confidence-building. First, despite charges of irrelevance, in practice, the European experience clearly has served as an important source of inspiration for regional confidence-building initiatives. While citing "fundamental differences" between the European context and the situation in the Middle East, Levite and Landau observe that CBMs are "not an inherently European construct;" on the contrary, the authors argue, CBMs

---

[5] Ralph A. Cossa, "Asia Pacific Confidence and Security Building Measures," in Ralph A. Cossa, ed., *Asia Pacific Confidence and Security Building Measures* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1995), 1–18.

[6] Proponents of this perspective usually emphasize the disparate historical experiences of Europe and other regions, and the fundamentally different security context or concerns of the latter. See, for example, the views expressed by Hugo Palma, "The Nature of Confidence-Building in the Latin American Environment," in *Confidence and Security Building Measures: From Europe to Other Regions*, United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, Topical Papers no. 7 (New York, 1991), 141–48; Ted Greenwood, "Experience from European and U.S.–Soviet Agreements," in Šumit Ganguly and Ted Greenwood, eds., *Mending Fences: Confidence and Security Building Measures in South Asia* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1996), 91–112; Jack Child, "Confidence-Building Measures and Their Application to Central America," in Augusto Varas, James A. Schear, and Lisa Owens, eds., *Confidence-Building Measures in Latin America* , Report no. 16 (Washington, DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center, February 1995), 5–21; Brad Roberts and Robert Ross, "Confidence and Security Building Measures: A USCSCAP Task Force Report," in Cossa, ed., *Asia Pacific Confidence and Security Building Measures*, 140–44; Geoffrey Kamp, *The Control of the Middle East Arms Race*, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies Study no. 25, (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1991),124–28; and Levite and Landau, *Confidence and Security Building Measures in the Middle East*, 14–17. See also Abdu Kinana, "The Relevance of CSBMs for Africa," 82–83; Oluyemi Adeniji, "Characteristics of CSBMs in Africa," 88–94; José María Morais, "Conflict in Africa: Causes and Solutions," 95–109; Syed Zakir Ali Zaidi, "CSBMs in South Asian Regions," 110–20; and Mohammad Jawhar, "Implications of the Regional Environment for Asia-Pacific CSBM Regimes," 121–29 in *Confidence and Security Building Measures: From Europe to Other Regions*.

"have always emerged in rather similar circumstances to those presently prevailing in the Middle East," namely, under contexts of profound distrust and a relative lack of political stability.[7] An analysis of confidence-building in India and Pakistan similarly concludes that, despite "numerous differences" between Europe and other regions, the European experience is "not totally irrelevant to South Asia."[8] In the Asia–Pacific region, CBMs may be appropriate as long as they are "properly crafted and carefully applied."[9] In short, though the selection and order of application may depart significantly from the European experience, CBMs are perceived as relevant to the security concerns of regions characterized by diverse political, economic, historical, and cultural circumstances. Second, the East–West conflict in Europe, although in many ways unique (just as every regional conflict is seemingly unique), can be viewed in a broader framework of conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms that permits comparison to other conflicts. In this sense, the roots of the Cold War, as well as the factors that first prompted the European states to risk limited forms of cooperation, can hold useful lessons regarding the preconditions for confidence-building and the contribution of these tools to conflict prevention or peace building processes. Definitive conclusions regarding the generic preconditions for confidence-building will likely await a more complete record of CBM successes and failures in many different regions; the European experience nevertheless can provide a useful point of departure for assessing the prerequisites of confidence-building.

In short, though the selection and order of application may depart significantly from the European experience, CBMs are perceived as relevant to the security concerns of regions characterized by diverse political, economic, historical, and cultural circumstances.

Conflict, Cooperation, and Confidence-Building

Although the negotiation and implementation of European CBMs in the Cold War context has been thoroughly documented, our understanding of the confidence-building mechanism nevertheless remains incomplete.[10] A number of analysts have identified various

[7] Levite and Landau, *Confidence and Security Building Measures in the Middle East*, 15.

[8] Greenwood, "Experience from European and US–Soviet Agreements," 110.

[9] Cossa, "Asia Pacific Confidence and Security Building Measures," 1.

[10] On European CBMs in general, see Alford, *Confidence-Building Measures in Europe*; Berg and Rotfeld, *Building Security in Europe*; Holst and Melander, "European Security." On the Helsinki CBMs, see John Maresca, *To Helsinki: The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1973–1975* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985). On the

factors as having contributed to the successful negotiation and implementation of CBMs, but a comprehensive assessment of their relative importance over time is lacking. Which conditions were essential and which merely facilitative? How do the preconditions for first-generation CBMs compare with those for subsequent refinements? The role that CBMs played in the resolution of the East–West conflict is undetermined as well. It is tempting to assume that CBMs and other arms control measures contributed significantly to a lessening of tensions in Cold War Europe; a causal relationship between CBMs and the transformation of East–West political relations has not been clearly established. Did CBMs provoke a shift of perceptions, as some argue, or did they merely enhance a process of transformation already under way? Or were they largely irrelevant to the subsequent improvement in political relations.[11]

To answer these questions, it is helpful to consider confidence-building as it relates to the sources of conflict and accommodation, and the processes of conflict management and resolution. Though Western theories of confidence-building viewed CBMs primarily in terms of arms control objectives, their contribution to the resolution of East–West differences was recognized implicitly. Beyond the specific function of greater military transparency, CBMs were intended, over time, to change perceptions of hostile intent. Confidence-building in the sense of greater certainty about military intentions was intended to build another type of confidence, that is, confidence as mutual trust. By requiring both sides to cooperate on minor military matters, CBMs could "embody and project notions of shared interest—a concept of common security."[12] Although designed to address specific military concerns, CBMs in the European context also served a broader confidence-building process, whose purpose was to build an ethos of cooperation and a habit of trust between adversaries. The confidence-building process, like cooperation in the economic, cultural, or political sphere, was intended to reinforce the underlying forces for accommodation, encouraging states

---

Stockholm Accord, see John Borawski, *From the Atlantic to the Urals: Negotiating Arms Control at the Stockholm Conference* (Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988); and Richard E. Darilek, "Building Security and Confidence in Europe: The Road To and From Stockholm," *Washington Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 45–54. For a description of the Vienna negotiations and the text of the 1990 Vienna accord, see Jane M. O. Sharp, "Conventional Arms Control in Vienna," in *SIPRI Yearbook 1991: World Armaments and Disarmament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 451–60, 475–88.

[11] James Macintosh, "Confidence and Security Building Measures: A Skeptical Look," Australian National University Peace Research Centre, Working Paper no. 85 (Canberra, July 1990), 24–25.

[12] Holst, "Confidence-Building Measures," 5.

locked in conflict to intensify their cooperation, perhaps, over time, even contributing to a resolution of differences.[13]

The notion of confidence-building assumes that states in conflict also share a potential for limited cooperation. Interests, experiences, and values, in other words, may prompt states not only to wage war but also to seek accommodation, particularly when a conflictual status quo becomes intolerable. In Cold War Europe, for example, underlying cultural affinities, and a long history of shared experience between the two halves of the continent, could not be entirely obliterated by ideological differences or by the imposition of Soviet-style political and economic systems in Eastern and Central Europe. A potential for accommodation remained intact across the East–West divide; the ever-present risk that conflict could escalate into a cataclysmic nuclear exchange made accommodation more urgent. The preconditions for confidence-building in Europe, in this sense, were the set of factors or events that prompted each side to undertake cooperative steps, in spite of continuing conflict.

In the study of negotiations, the point at which accommodation becomes possible marks the "ripening" of a conflict.[14] Richard Haass identifies four essential conditions of "ripeness:" a shared perception that an accord is preferable to the absence of agreement; leaders who are able to agree to an accord; enough compromise on both sides to ensure that the accord is accepted at home; and a mutually acceptable approach or process for settling the conflict. Other studies argue that a disputed issue may not be negotiable before there has been a volitional change in the way a conflict situation is perceived; both parties to a conflict must perceive their common interest in a mutually agreed solution as exceeding conflicting interests.[15] What these and other explorations of the negotiation process have in common is

---

[13] Child views CBMs as occupying a midpoint along the continuum between "peacemaking" and "peace building" efforts. Peacemaking activities involve the application of military force to impose a peace settlement, to separate warring parties, or to monitor compliance with a peace settlement. Peace building, in contrast, seeks to resolve the immediate or underlying causes of a conflict or, short of that, to make conflict less likely. CBMs belong in the latter category, although they may be useful at many points along the continuum: "Present through all of these steps towards peace is the need for CBMs that lower the likelihood of conflict breaking out owing to misunderstandings or misreadings of intentions and capabilities." Child, "Confidence-Building Measures and Their Application to Central America," 9.

[14] On the notion of ripeness, see Richard N. Haass, *Conflicts Unending: The United States and Regional Conflicts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), chap. 1; I. William Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), chaps. 1, 6; and I. William Zartman, "Ripening Conflict, Ripe Moment, Formula, and Mediation," in Diane B. Bendahmane and John W. McDonald, eds., *Perspectives on Negotiation*, Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Service Institute (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1986), 205–27.

[15] I. William Zartman and Maureen R. Berman, *The Practical Negotiator* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 44–45.

the notion that progress toward conflict resolution is not possible unless a critical set of conditions has been met, that is, until the conflict has ripened.

The degree of ripeness determines whether warring states can only agree to stabilize or manage the conflict between them, or whether gradual resolution of outstanding differences is possible. The realization that the status quo has become unbearable or that a unilateral solution is impossible, an indigenous change of government, or external pressure on the warring parties may all play a role in the ripening of a conflict. Limited cooperation does not require that the sources of conflict be eliminated, only that the factors favoring cooperation become strong enough for minor steps to be possible. In some instances, conditions may be only ripe enough to permit agreement on measures intended to prolong the next outbreak of war. More ambitious forms of cooperation, and progress toward resolution of a conflict, presumably require a greater degree of ripeness.

In the case of confidence-building, it is most often assumed that the preconditions are less stringent than those for conflict resolution, since CBMs are viewed as precursors to arms control, or tools designed to "work toward the day when solution-oriented diplomacy can work."[16] The preconditions for the negotiation of CBMs may also be different from those needed to ensure the successful implementation of CBMs. In his study of CBMs in Latin America, for example, Jack Child observes that the preconditions for CBMs are more modest than those for more ambitious forms of "peacemaking." Their success, however, may depend on whether they are "accompanied by diplomatic efforts to lower tensions . . . and, fundamentally, by the 'positive peace' development effort aimed at the basic root cause of the conflict. . . ." Additionally, the effectiveness of CBMs may be affected by the "prevailing international situation and by tensions (or detente) among major powers, as well as by the relationship between the immediate parties to the conflict."[17] Levite and Landau also imply different sets of conditions for the negotiation and implementation of CBMs. The first set of conditions includes incentives to seek an alternative to the status quo, the second, conditions "that must be present in order to be able to adopt this tool."[18] Among the incentives and conditions identified by the authors are:

- a common interest in cooperating and a shared recognition that cooperation is necessary in order to alleviate a "mutually uncomfortable" status quo;
- a shared recognition "that distrust and suspicions" contribute to the unacceptable status quo;

---

[16] Haass, "Conflicts Unending," 29 .

[17] Child, "Confidence-Building Measures and Their Application to Central America," 13–14.

[18] Levite and Landau, *Confidence and Security Building Measures in the Middle East*, 11.

- a common willingness to enter into negotiations, implying, in turn, "some direct contact, although it may be shallow and narrowly circumscribed;"
- strong leaders that are capable of garnering support at home and that do not fear the initiation of negotiations; and

- "favorable objective conditions" for application, which may include, among other things, technological capabilities and "suitable geographic conditions."[19]

In sum, that some set of minimal conditions presumably is necessary to initiate the confidence-building process; different conditions may be required to ensure successful implementation of the negotiated measures and still other circumstances to sustain and advance the confidence-building process.

The Preconditions of European Confidence-Building during the Cold War

The evolution of European confidence-building measures during the Cold War can be divided roughly into three phases (see Table 3). Important precursors to the Helsinki CBMs included a series of bilateral arrangements between the United States and the Soviet Union, whose primary purpose was to create more reliable communication channels for the exchange of information, particularly following unforeseen incidents or accidents. The second phase introduced a packet of multilateral, mostly voluntary CBMs. Codified in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, these 'groundbreakers' were of minor military significance. The Stockholm Accord (1986) and the Vienna Agreement (1990) marked a significant turning point in the development of CBMs. The notification, observation, and access provisions contained in the two accords, as well as further development of East–West communication and consultation mechanisms, represented significant steps toward greater military significance, verifiability, and formal political commitment. The two accords also mark a critical turning point in the evolution of the East–West conflict and consequently in the role of CBMs. After 1990, improving political relations between the United States and the Soviet Union/Russia facilitated the negotiation and implementation of more ambitious structural arms control agreements that effectively diminished the importance of CBMs as conflict prevention tools. This survey therefore focuses on the evolution of confidence-building measures preceding the dramatic changes that brought an end to the East–West competition in Europe.

In general, negotiators and analysts of European CBMs identify three types of factors as having contributed to the successful negotiation and implementation of the Helsinki, Stockholm, and Vienna agreements (see Tables 1 and 2). The first category encompasses all contextual factors—important structural, historical, cultural, political, institutional, and

[19] Ibid., 12.

technological characteristics of the East–West conflict in Europe. The second category consists of processual factors, defined as characteristics of the negotiation or confidence-building process itself. Factors that appear to have been decisive during specific phases of European confidence-building can be grouped into a third category, that of political developments in East–West relations.

Contextual Factors. Cold War Europe was characterized by a unique set of structural, historical, cultural, political, institutional, and technological conditions and circumstances. In contrast to many other conflictual regions, Cold War Europe was divided into two roughly symmetrical blocs. This bipolar structure, and the preponderant weight of each superpower within its respective bloc, constituted a powerful force for stability and may have facilitated the negotiation and implementation of successive generations of CBMs. Yet this bipolar structure was superimposed upon a foundation of important commonalities. Centuries of shared history, cultural affinities, and religious ties provided an important potential for accommodation, despite the important ideological and other differences dividing the two blocs. Over the centuries, a more or less stable system of states had evolved. In Western Europe the arduous task of state-building was largely complete. In Eastern and Central Europe the system of postwar states was less stable, but the iron hand of Stalinist regimes effectively prevented simmering ethnic differences from exploding into armed conflict. Though governments in the West might falter, political systems and the leaders they produced were generally strong enough to negotiate CBM agreements, and to ensure that such agreements were implemented and adhered to by successor governments. Civilian control over most national militaries doubtless played a decisive role as well. Finally, at least in the West, modern infrastructures of communication, political organization, and opportunities and means to travel may have also played a role in developing public awareness of confidence-building 'successes' beyond the narrow circles of political and military elites, thus building a broader-based consensus in favor of further cooperative initiatives.

Certain institutional features of the European landscape contributed to the evolution of confidence-building as well. In contrast to many regions, the European states had at their disposal a system of interlocking and overlapping multilateral institutions that could facilitate communication and coordination among states. Aside from their formally designated functions, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Community, as well as their now defunct Eastern counterparts, the Warsaw Pact Organization and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), provided Europe with a degree of stability and organization unknown in other conflict-torn regions. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) provided an institutional home to dialogue across divided Europe and helped to create a habit of negotiation and cooperation among the member states. A grouping of neutral and nonaligned states outside the East–West institutional structure provided an important impetus to the process of European reconciliation.

At the societal level, strong public and elite support for the arms control process helped to sustain the confidence-building negotiations even as East–West political relations worsened steadily during the early 1980s. In many Western European countries, and in the Federal Republic of Germany in particular, large peace movements and political parties and organizations pressured leaders for progress at the negotiating table. For many governments, sustaining the arms control process seemed to become an end in itself, or at least an important means of reassuring a public uneasy at the prospect of the growing number of nuclear weapons deployed on the European continent. After the collapse in late 1983 of the negotiations on Intermediate Nuclear Forces in Europe (INF) and of the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START), the Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM) talks were the only East–West arms control forum still alive, due in large part to committed European leaders who saw in the Stockholm negotiations a way to preserve vestiges of East–West détente despite tensions between the superpowers.

Finally, the presence of nuclear weapons may have influenced the development of CBMs decisively. The dangers and risks posed by the presence of nuclear weapons provided each side with a strong incentive to reduce the threat of nuclear war through miscalculation or accident. Since any conflict in Europe might escalate to a nuclear exchange, risk reduction also entailed regulation of other activities that could be easily misinterpreted by the other side. In this sense, nuclear weapons may have compelled each alliance to risk cooperation in the hope of diminishing the even greater perils of unregulated competition.

Processual Factors. Three aspects of the confidence-building process appear to have been important to the evolution of CBMs in Europe. First, military confidence-building measures were embedded in a broader strategy of East–West economic cooperation and political dialogue. At the negotiating table, this integrated approach created important opportunities for trade-offs among the various 'baskets' of the CSCE process. Moreover, under the CSCE umbrella, confidence-building in the military realm, at least in theory, could receive new impetus from gains in economic or political confidence-building, in turn reinforcing the benefits of any one element of cooperation. Second, the relatively minor importance assigned to confidence-building—in relation to other East–West arms control negotiations—for the most part prevented the CSCE negotiations on confidence-building measures from becoming overly politicized. Public attention, particularly in the United States, was focused more intensely on the negotiations to reduce strategic (SALT, START) and theater nuclear weapons (INF), possibly allowing CBM negotiators more latitude to seek mutually satisfactory solutions. Finally, the European approach to confidence-building was gradual and evolutionary in nature. Progress from so-called 'pre-CBMs' to third generation 'cooperative security' measures under negotiation in the early 1990s stretched over a period of almost thirty years.

Political Developments in East–West Relations and Confidence-Building in Cold War Europe

If the contextual and processual factors described above have been necessary for success in confidence-building, they do not appear to have been sufficient by themselves either to start the process of confidence-building or to propel both sides toward more militarily significant steps. Rather, both the initiation of the process and its continuation and refinement appear to have been closely linked to key political developments in East–West relations. Although it is impossible to determine with certainty which events or developments were most decisive, certain prominent political developments stand out as possible precursors to successive phases in European confidence-building (see Table 2).

'Pre-CBMs': Soviet–American Agreements. Early bilateral agreements between the Soviet Union and the United States, such as the hotline agreement and the Incidents at Sea Agreement, share a common intent: the desire to reduce the risks of inadvertent or accidental conflict that, in turn, might escalate into nuclear conflagration. The Cuban missile crisis heightened awareness of the threat of mutual annihilation, perhaps providing the necessary impetus for these first cooperative steps.

'Groundbreakers': The Helsinki CBMs. The European experiment in confidence-building, initiated in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, was preceded by an important shift in thinking about European security, codified in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's 1967 Harmel Report. The report stated that Western defense efforts and détente were no longer incompatible but complementary paths to greater security. The idea that accommodation was possible, despite continuing competition, had been born. The gradual reestablishment of trade ties and communication links during the détente of the 1970s may have reawakened consciousness on both sides of the East–West divide of shared experiences and values that transcended ideological differences, providing indirect support for cooperative actions in the military sphere. Stabilization of the German question and recognition of the inviolability of postwar borders in Europe were of critical importance in this process of rapprochement. Landmark agreements included West Germany's renunciation-of-force treaties with the Soviet Union and Poland, and the 1971 Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin.

'Security Building Measures': The Stockholm and Vienna Accords. The 1986 Stockholm Accord marked a significant departure from the Helsinki CBMs—a progression captured in the change of terminology from confidence-building to confidence and security building measures (CSBMs). The strong support of West European political elites and publics for the CSCE process, the persistence of European diplomats in Stockholm, and US leadership during the negotiations were important factors in the completion of the 1986 accord. The gradual routinization and institutionalization of the CSCE process may have offered indirect support to the efforts of the West European allies and nonaligned states to achieve a new CSBM agreement. The breakthrough in East–West relations, set in motion by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, paved the way for the pathbreaking provisions contained in the 1990 Vienna agreement.

The history of confidence-building in Europe suggests that key political events may be decisive to initiating the process of confidence-building; further progress may depend on critical contextual and processual factors. The looming threat of mutual nuclear annihilation, accentuated by the Cuban missile crisis, led to the realization that a continuation of the status quo was no longer acceptable. The first step in superpower confidence-building—the so-called hotline agreement—followed. In Europe new thinking about security, captured in the Harmel formula of "defense plus détente," facilitated agreement on postwar borders and on a modus vivendi for the German question. With the principle of territorial inviolability formally recognized, the thirty-five members of the CSCE began to explore the possibilities for cooperation, in the process building on a foundation of shared but slumbering historical, cultural, and religious heritage. The availability of effective structures of regional cooperation, the urgings of the neutral and nonaligned states, and the diffusion of support for East–West cooperation throughout a broad segment of the European population no doubt facilitated success in confidence-building. Over time, and virtually unnoticed, the CSCE process, with its military, economic, and political components, worked gradually and unobtrusively to plant the seeds of a new notion of cooperative security.

Confidence-Building in Regions of Conflict: Adapting the Lessons of Europe

The evolution of confidence-building measures in Europe was shaped by a complex combination of contextual, processual, and political factors unlikely to be duplicated in other regions of the world. Cold War Europe comprised a system of relatively strong states and stable alliances, both of which possessed nuclear weapons. The first formal confidence-building measures were preceded by recognition of the inviolability of postwar borders and years of modest, informal economic and political exchanges. In contrast, many conflict-torn regions of the world are characterized by relatively weak states that may be burdened with the dual challenges of state formation and economic development, in which the military may function as an important symbol of national sovereignty or as an tool of domestic repression, significantly complicating agreement on CBMs.

The mixed record of regional confidence-building measures indeed exhibits striking departures from the European model. First-generation CBMs in other regions have not been identical to the measures negotiated in Helsinki. In Europe important precursors to CBMs included the establishment of communication hotlines and agreement on rules-of-the-road for naval vessels, whereas agreement on aerial inspections was not reached until the completion of the Stockholm Agreement. In the Middle East, by contrast, aerial inspections were among the first CBMs to be implemented. And in many regions, these traditional confidence-building tools have been supplemented with nonmilitary initiatives that are similarly intended to build an 'ethos of cooperation' between states locked in conflict.

Despite some limited similarities, the conditions under which CBM agreements have been negotiated in other regions appear to vary significantly from the European pattern as well. As in Europe, CBMs in other regions have usually preceded a transformation of political relations, the negotiation of structural limits on military forces, or the final resolution of the disputes dividing the warring parties. In contrast to Europe, however, confidence-building measures in other regions often have been negotiated under conditions of "critical asymmetries and structural imbalances," which may include wide disparities in military forces, security assets, territory, population, and natural resources.[20] For example, as noted above, both NATO and the Warsaw Pact had tacitly recognized the division of influence and inviolability of postwar borders before agreement on first-generation CBMs was reached. In contrast, neither India and Pakistan nor the countries of the Middle East have recognized, tacitly or otherwise, the territorial claims of adversaries, yet modest CBMs have been implemented in both regions.

The uneven pattern of differences and similarities across regions and historical contexts underscores the need for caution in extrapolating general conclusions regarding the preconditions for confidence-building from one historical case. The European experience in confidence-building nevertheless may hold a number of general lessons for other regions of conflict.

First, confidence-building must be adapted to the unique cultural, historical, political, and economic conditions of different regions. Rather than merely transplant European tools to other regions, a pragmatic approach to regional confidence-building would begin by considering the roots of conflict and the potential sources of accommodation, and then craft a confidence-building strategy appropriate to the conflict and tailored to the unique geographical, political, economic, and cultural conditions in the region.

In some instances, adaptation may require expanding conventional notions of confidence-building beyond the military realm. As noted above, non-Western perspectives often emphasize the need for a concept of confidence-building that encompasses a broader spectrum of security concerns. Where the threats to security are primarily military in nature, concrete technical tools are appropriate. Where conflicts have deep historical roots, cooperation in the military realm may not be feasible. In such instances, nonmilitary measures such as the joint exploitation of resources, cooperative development programs, and mutual efforts to stem environmental degradation might supplant first-generation military CBMs. In other cases, a package of tools that pairs military CBMs with political, economic, or environmental CBMs might be more suitable to local needs. The European experience indeed suggests that integrated approaches to confidence-building are most effective in strengthening

[20]Levite and Landau, *Confidence and Security Building Measures in the Middle East*, 15.

the sources of accommodation. If military CBMs are implemented in isolation, animosity and mistrust may effectively short-circuit the confidence-building process, largely neutralizing the positive influence of CBMs on perceptions of hostile intent.

Second, even when a confidence-building strategy has been finely tuned to the unique contextual characteristics of a particular regional conflict, the experience of Europe suggests that timing is critical. Unless conditions are ripe for confidence-building, even limited attempts at accommodation may end in failure.

A definitive assessment of the preconditions of CBMs will require a composite view of confidence-building, based on insights drawn not only from the European example but from the perspectives and experiences of non-European states as well. Descriptions and analyses of European CBMs abound; comparable systematic and comprehensive treatments of regional confidence-building would doubtless enhance our understanding of how, and under what circumstances, CBMs do or do not work.

Skeptics of regional confidence-building effort would be wise to remember the shortcomings and setbacks that accompanied the evolution of European CBMs.

What kinds of CBMs have been attempted in other parts of the world? With what results? What factors appear to have prompted conflicting parties to undertake cooperative steps? What political, economic, cultural, or other factors contributed to the success or failure of these efforts? Even if there are no universally applicable preconditions for confidence-building, a more complete understanding of CBM successes and failures around the world might yield new insights and lessons relevant to other non-European regions.

Third, the European experience underscores the need to consider the linkages between CBMs and other processes of conflict management when crafting confidence-building strategies. Confidence-building, in short, must be viewed not only in terms of traditional arms control objectives, but in relation to negotiation, meditation, and peacekeeping efforts. In many conflict-torn areas of the world, unripe conditions or the pressures of time may preclude traditional, negotiated approaches to confidence-building. In such instances, a third party may be necessary to jump-start the confidence-building process. The most obvious candidates to play the role of third party confidence-builder would be the United Nations and other regional mediating organizations. The introduction, for example, of a peacekeeping regime into an area of conflict might be accompanied by CBMs. Alternatively, in regions where states are unable

or unwilling to negotiate and implement CBMs of their own accord, peacekeeping itself might be considered an important form of confidence-building.[21]

Finally, if there is any broader lesson to be drawn from the European experience, it is the importance of modest expectations, patience, and an appreciation of small gains in trust. Skeptics of regional confidence-building efforts, in other words, would be wise to remember the shortcomings and setbacks that accompanied the evolution of European CBMs. The first negotiated CBMs were preceded by two decades of small tests of trust; further refinements unfolded over an additional two decades. Progress was achieved in increments, and the outcome was often criticized for failing to live up to original expectations. Viewed in this context, the first steps in regional confidence-building, faults and shortcomings notwithstanding, are a promising beginning. In the final analysis, the question is not whether CBMs are relevant and applicable to other regions, but how much adaptation and creativity will be required in order to meet the unique confidence-building needs of particular regions and conflicts.

[21] William J. Durch, "The UN-Army: Peacekeeping, Conflict Resolution, and Human Rights in the 1990s," paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Security Studies Section, International Studies Association, Annapolis, Maryland, 1991 November 7–9 (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center), 3.