

Conflict Avoidance, Confidence-Building, and Peacemaking

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Confidence-building measures (CBMs) played an essential role in improving East–West relations during the Cold War. Nevertheless, these unilateral, tacit or negotiated, steps to improve cooperation or decrease tension clearly took a back seat to formal arms control negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. With the Soviet Union’s demise, CBMs have emerged from the shadows of strategic arms reductions. They have become the preeminent means of preventing accidental wars and unintended escalation in strife-ridden regions.

The Cold War Experience

Beginning with the establishment of the “hotline” after the Cuban missile crisis, the East–West CBM toolbox grew to include agreed rules for superpower navies operating in close proximity, and data exchanges on military equipment and force deployments. The West made a concerted effort not just to negotiate CBMs in the military-security arena, but also to develop other “baskets” of measures to promote economic and cultural exchanges as well as respect for human rights.

One of the most important breakthroughs in US–Soviet relations—an agreement to accept mandatory on-site inspections—was first negotiated in the 1986 Stockholm accord to ease concerns arising from large-scale military exercises. Important new measures were added to the toolbox once the Cold War began to thaw, such as the acceptance of cooperative aerial inspections or “open skies,” observations within military garrisons, and the creation of a crisis prevention center. Today there are literally dozens of CBMs to ease East–West security concerns that can now be used to establish new patterns of cooperation between old adversaries.

Nonetheless, nuclear arms control negotiations took center stage during the Cold War, as both sides invested nuclear weapons with symbolic power to match their destructive potential. The strategic arms limitation and reduction talks paradoxically became a reflection of the strategic competition as well as a means to ameliorate it. In conflict-prone regions like South Asia and the Middle East, CBMs have also assumed these dual roles. In the absence of political reconciliation in these tense regions, the negotiation and implementation of CBMs have helped maintain the absence of hostilities and reaffirm international norms against the use of weapons of mass destruction.

The East–West experience presents the most fully developed model for CBMs, notable for the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, which formally recognized the status quo in Europe and facilitated a process of interaction between East and West, including the invitation of observers to military exercises on a voluntary basis. The Stockholm accord mandated such inspections, in addition to requiring an annual calendar of notifiable military activities. The 1990 Vienna Document considerably broadened data exchanges, including detailed information on force deployments, major weapons programs, and military budgets. The 1992 Vienna Agreement added another level of transparency by requiring demonstrations of new types of military equipment.

In the East–West struggle, CBMs facilitated the negotiation of formal arms control agreements and provided strengthening measures for existing accords. Their continuing utility stems, in part, from their adaptability. CBMs are perfectly suited for the post-Cold War era because they are flexible instruments that allow national leaders to adapt to a radically transformed security environment.

Some have mistakenly concluded that the practice of negotiating and implementing CBMs is essentially a western phenomenon that is not as applicable to other regions and cultures. While it is true that CBMs became widely utilized by countries belonging to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact, it is also quite evident—as chronicled in this *CBM Handbook*—that many other regions are engaged in this work. Indeed, the practice of CBMs predates the establishment of the modern nation state in Europe. Only the terminology is new and “western.” What matters, of course, is not the terminology, but the practice of conflict avoidance, confidence-building and peace making. Wise practitioners in different regions are eager to learn about efforts elsewhere, seeking to learn from mistakes and to adapt successful CBMs to meet local needs.

A Post-Cold War Growth Industry

After every major war, perverse problems and heady opportunities present themselves in strange and variable mixtures. These conditions have reappeared with the end of the Cold War. Entropic forces coexist alongside integrative trends in economics and communications, while blood feuds proceed concurrently with democratic and market reforms. Under these confusing circumstances, political leaders would do well to accentuate the positive and guard against the negative. Wise leaders will utilize CBMs for precisely these reasons, since CBMs are well suited to consolidate gains, while providing buffers against losses.

Once in place, CBMs can readily accommodate changed circumstances, as is most evident by the Open Skies Treaty. Negotiated to increase transparency in a region divided by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Warsaw Pact alliances, cooperative aerial

inspections can now be employed to alleviate security concerns between Russia and Ukraine, and to dampen the potential for ethnic conflict between Hungary and Romania.

CBMs will also be a growth industry because they are easier to negotiate and implement than formal arms control agreements. CBMs can be tacit and informal, such as the general understandings between Israel and Jordan to cooperate in combating terrorist incidents across the Jordan River, including the establishment of a hotline in 1975 between each nation's intelligence service, the Mossad and the Mukhabarat. Alternatively, CBMs can be quite specific but publicly unannounced, such as the existing agreements between India and Pakistan establishing ground rules for military exercises and aerial operations along their border.

Formal but private CBMs are also employed in the Middle East, where the United States routinely carries out aerial monitoring of the 1974 Israeli–Syrian disengagement agreement. In these operations, blessed by the states overflown and code-named Olive Harvest, the United States confirms compliance with agreed-upon thin-out zones for military equipment and personnel. Many CBMs, however, are a matter of record, such as the agreement between Argentina and Brazil to permit international inspections of their nuclear facilities.

As these examples suggest, CBMs are already a worldwide phenomenon, as national leaders far removed from Europe have begun to adapt old CBMs and design new measures for their own purposes. These leaders understand that CBMs cannot be mindlessly transposed from Europe to other regions of the globe. Nonetheless, adaptation is possible because concerns raised during the Cold War over border security, surprise attack, accidental war, and unintended escalation are felt in many regions.

During the Spring of 1990, for example, tensions were fueled by large-scale violence in Kashmir, supported by Pakistan. The Indian government moved troops into Kashmir to contain disturbances, but the Indian army chief of staff, General V. N. Sharma, kept his tank deployments behind the Indira Gandhi Canal so as to signal an intention not to cross the Pakistani border. Moreover, to clarify their peaceful intentions, both countries allowed US observers to monitor force deployments. For its part, Pakistan had permitted foreign defense attachés based in Islamabad to observe its 1989 *Zarb-e-Momin* exercises.

North and South Korea have also negotiated an extremely ambitious CBM agenda including security, political, and trade-related measures. Implementation has been poor, however, as political conditions in North Korea have been inhospitable to far-reaching transparency and reconciliation. Even in Central America, an area beset during the 1980s with internal conflicts and border friction, a five-nation security commission has begun to discuss

regionwide CBMs. The Organization of American States has created a special committee on hemispheric security which is investigating CBMs.

This brief sampling of CBMs suggests many shortfalls and halting steps, but it is nonetheless impressive for its regional diversity and creativity. More and more political and military leaders are turning to these tools to prevent conflict, provide indications and warning of troubling developments, negotiate peace agreements, and strengthen fragile accords.

Stage One: Conflict Avoidance

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such as the Middle East and South Asia, useful initiatives have been taken despite the inability or reluctance of national leaders to resolve fundamental differences. These steps have met the minimal requirements of not worsening any state's security and not increasing existing levels of hostility. No matter how serious outstanding grievances are, prudent national leaders will wish to avoid inadvertent escalation or accidental war.

These initial steps, like the establishment of hotlines between Indian and Pakistani sector commanders along the Line-of-Control in Kashmir, and between Indian and Chinese sector commanders along their disputed border, cannot solve underlying political and territorial

disputes. Nevertheless, if precursor steps help prevent a full-blown crisis from occurring, they can still have enormous worth. The implementation of these measures can serve as an essential safety net against explosive developments, such as the destruction of religious shrines, urban acts of terror, and increased levels of violence in disputed territories.

Perhaps it is best to characterize initial steps to avoid unwanted wars and unintended escalation as conflict avoidance measures (CAMs) rather than CBMs.¹ One such measure is the 1992 agreement between India and Pakistan to provide prior notification of military exercises involving more than ten thousand troops and the establishment of no-fly zones along their

¹ The author is grateful to Peter Constable for suggesting this term.

border. By opening channels of communication and providing modest transparency of selected military practices, these small tests of trust might also lay the groundwork for more substantive measures later on, if the agreements are implemented properly and if political leaders are amenable to subsequent steps.

Conflict avoidance measures can be taken even when states have not established diplomatic relations, as attested by the Israeli–Syrian aerial monitoring agreements along the Golan Heights. Conflict avoidance measures could include unpublicized “red lines” that are likely to trigger vigorous responses if crossed by military forces. Israel, for example, has drawn a red line for Syrian troops within Lebanon that Damascus has respected. Amman benefits from a similar Israeli red line for foreign troops crossing Jordanian borders.

Another conflict avoidance measure, employed between Israel and Egypt, is the acceptance, with six hours’ advance notification, of national aerial reconnaissance flights along the median line of the buffer zone separating Israeli and Egyptian troops in the Sinai Peninsula. This practice, mediated by the United States in the 1974 Egyptian–Israeli disengagement agreement, established a framework for cooperative aerial inspections between once hostile states.

Not every first step needs to relate directly to conflict prevention. When government-to-government communication channels become a forum for ritualized grievances and rebuttals, or when such channels are completely absent, non-governmental meetings can help stimulate problem-solving approaches while combating enemy images. The “Dartmouth Group” meetings between American and Soviet experts served these purposes during the depths of the Cold War. A similar body, the “Neemrana Group” (named after a fort in Rajasthan), of Indian and Pakistani former officials and nongovernmental experts was created in 1991. It has now been supplanted by many other nongovernmental channels of communication.

One reason to implement CAMs is to provide a cooling-off period after wars or periods of high tension. “Buying time” is a neutral profession, however. Cooling-off periods can be used to prepare for new wars, to conduct diplomatic activity toward conflict resolution, or simply to freeze a conflictual situation, such as the cease-fire arrangements for the Turkish–Greek impasse over Cyprus. CBMs are not value neutral: they will always be shaped by the motivation of national leaders over preferred end-states.

As a result, fears will arise that initial steps might be a Trojan horse, or an extension of a deadly strategic competition by other means. If this perception—whether real or imagined—is strongly felt, first steps will be halting, at best. In this way, the process of negotiating and implementing CBMs is self-regulating: if initial steps do not have proven worth, they will not readily be followed by others.

In South Asia, some fear that negotiating CBMs related to the nuclear issue will place national leaders on a dangerous “slippery slope” leading to membership in the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. But leaders will always retain a veto power on the process: only those measures will be implemented that serve the interests of all participating states. The existing level of tension in South Asia has provided the most compelling reason to start this process, even though grievances over Kashmir clearly limit the extent of progress.

Initial steps for security related CBMs can be specifically designed to provide early indications and warning of hostile intentions. Measures that mandate annual calendars of military exercises or limits on their size and proximity to sensitive regions can be particularly useful in addressing domestic misgivings because they clearly promote national security. When agreed guidelines are not observed, a greater alert status would be warranted, and domestic advocates for more trusting arrangements would be weakened.

A building-block approach to CBMs is more appropriate when little foundation for trust exists in tense regions. Ambitious first steps, such as the comprehensive CBM agreements between North and South Korea, will face serious implementation problems, with no track record to alleviate distrust and no safety net to cushion failure.

The motivations behind the negotiation of initial steps need not be in concert. Nor do states require equivalent or balanced military capabilities to take initial steps, as the CBMs between Israel and Jordan or the Open Skies Treaty overflights suggest. All that is required is for the parties to see separate value in the particular steps chosen and for those steps not to intensify existing levels of hostility. If the parties view CBMs as a zero-sum game, negotiations will prove exceedingly difficult.

Integrated approaches that combine initiatives in the economic, political, humanitarian, cultural, and military realms have worked in the European context, where the creation of separate baskets facilitated trade-offs: at the outset of negotiations, the East hoped for economic gains and the West wanted improved records on human rights. Over time both blocs came to see the value of security measures. This matrix proved a good fit.

A similar negotiating strategy has obvious limitations in other regions of tension. In the Middle East, for example, linkages between baskets is stymied by the lack of diplomatic relations between Israel and most of its neighbors. India and Pakistan have confined their initial steps after the 1990 war scare to conflict prevention. Subsequently, both countries explored other steps in the economic, cultural, and humanitarian fields. Progress has been quite modest, however, given continued grievances over the Kashmir issue. The most significant cooperative agreement between India and Pakistan remains the 1962 Indus Waters Treaty brokered by the World Bank, which provided a cooperative structure for the sharing

and use of the subcontinent's northwestern river waters that were disputed after the 1947 partition.

Stage Two: Confidence-Building

Simply put, negotiating conflict avoidance measures takes political will, but not in large measure, since prudent national leaders will wish to avoid unnecessary wars. The second stage of this process is far more difficult, as it requires traversing the critical passage from conflict avoidance to confidence-building. Far more political capital is required to reach this higher plane when states have deep-seated grievances or core issues to resolve. The South Asian and Middle East disputes are stuck here, between war and peace, awaiting national leaders willing and able to take politically risky initiatives toward reconciliation.

In both regions, the building blocks for CBMs are in place, but more far-reaching measures have been held hostage to progress on core issues. In the Arab–Israeli dispute demilitarized and thin-out zones along Israel’s borders with Egypt and Syria have been in place for more than two decades. Multinational peacekeepers effectively monitor buffer zones, and cooperative aerial inspections provide indications and warning of troubling developments. As a result, Arab and Israeli leaders can conclude that accidental war is no longer of great concern.

With the signing of the Israeli–PLO peace treaty in 1994, countries in the Middle East would face the test of moving toward true confidence-building. Israel would like to negotiate CBMs, in part because of the uncertainties associated with territorial withdrawal. Arab leaders have expressed the view that CBMs are entirely negotiable, once Israel has agreed to tackle core political issues and swap land for peace. The Arab–Israeli dispute was traversing this heavily mined terrain when Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was killed by an assassin, leaving the Middle East peace process, along with its CBMs, in dangerous suspension.

In South Asia, the transition phase from conflict avoidance to confidence-building is also extremely difficult. To begin with, CAMs are far less sturdy and their implementation has been spotty. Moreover, an active negotiating channel has been difficult to establish to address Pakistan’s grievances over the status of Kashmir and its Muslim population, and India’s central grievances over Pakistan’s support for separatist groups. Both governments are leery of taking any steps that can be viewed as conciliatory—and politically damaging—in the face of continuing provocations. A possible framework to discuss Kashmir as well as other issues was negotiated in 1997, but almost immediately generated further disputes.

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As a result of lingering grievances, India and Pakistan are not yet ready to adopt an unequivocal “live and let live” policy toward one another. Each continues to jab at the other's soft spots while avoiding open warfare. As a result, partial steps have been taken to decrease the probability of unintended escalation, but this foundation for CBMs remains unfinished, and new construction has been delayed by the demolition of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya by Hindu chauvinists, the bombings in Bombay apparently coordinated by Muslim criminal elements, continuing violence in Kashmir, and governmental instability in India and Pakistan.

In light of these developments, Pakistan has deferred implementation of agreements negotiated with India in 1991 to exchange military bands and to conduct joint mountaineering expeditions and naval sailing races. Such measures are now considered cosmetic and damaging politically by Pakistani officials and high-ranking military officers. In contrast, civilian and military leaders in both countries appear to see clear value in CAMs.

With continuing grievances over the Kashmir dispute, cautious national leaders in New Delhi and Islamabad can use existing CAMs to contain explosions, but not as a springboard toward political reconciliation.

CBMs can become a vital companion to peacemaking, but not a substitute for it in regions of great tension. Indeed, without CBMs, including the good offices of a trusted third party, politically risky peacemaking efforts can easily fail. Many measures are available to facilitate the transition to confidence-building when political conditions permit. These CBMs might build upon precursor steps, such as formally acknowledging tacit understandings already in place or resolving border disputes that are not central to national security.

The forms adopted for CBMs can be as important as their substance. The transition from conflict avoidance to confidence-building can be symbolized by the acceptance of foreign military observers at pre-notified exercises. If this transition is too difficult to accomplish in one step, third parties can be usefully engaged, including multinational inspection teams that comprise representatives from adversarial states.

Security measures are absolutely essential during the transition stage, but true peacemaking also requires CBMs in the commercial, humanitarian, and cultural areas. The objectives at this stage are to establish new patterns of interaction that will become perceived

as beneficial within participating states, and to make these patterns harder to reverse when perturbations occur.

The process of transition from conflict avoidance to confidence-building is obviously easier if there are no core issues blocking the way. Domestic impediments that have prevented forward progress will still have to be surmounted, however. In the case of Argentina and Brazil it is noteworthy that CBMs on nuclear programs were undertaken only after fledgling democracies were in place in both governments, committed to devoting greater resources to economic development. Even without deep-seated grievances, both countries were unable to agree to transparency measures under military-dominated governments.

Risk-taking for Peace

The stakes involved in the US–Soviet competition ensured a far more perilous transition from conflict avoidance to conflict resolution. Mikhail Gorbachev successfully challenged Washington to move beyond Cold War thinking with powerful symbolic gestures and public declarations, such as his frank acknowledgment that the Krasnoyarsk radar constituted a violation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was a risk taker of similar stature. His trip to Jerusalem utterly recast Israeli–Egyptian relations, despite the hard-nosed content of his speech before the Israeli Knesset. President Fernando Collor de Mello symbolized his intention to close down the Brazilian military’s nuclear weapons program by flying to the Amazon and shoveling dirt into a deep shaft originally dug for the purpose of carrying out an underground nuclear test.

Significantly, these symbolic gestures and transformational journeys did not occur in a vacuum; they were preceded by useful conflict avoidance measures. In the US–Soviet competition ‘precursor’ CBMs, such as the hotline and 1972 Incidents at Sea Agreement, helped to prevent unintended escalation until Gorbachev was willing to change ingrained habits of superpower hostility. Sadat’s initiatives were facilitated by an impressive set of conflict avoidance measures brokered after the 1973 Arab–Israeli war by the Nixon Administration.

In each of these cases, the groundwork for CBMs was different in important respects. In the East–West competition the precipitous decline in the Soviet economy appears to have been central to Gorbachev’s calculations. In the Middle East Sadat earned freedom of maneuver by waging war against Israeli occupation of Egyptian land. In the Southern Cone discredited military regimes allowed fledgling democracies to break new ground. Comparative

studies of these and other transitions from conflict avoidance to confidence-building are essential in order to better understand the dynamics of transformation.

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Active and farsighted leadership is required when the risks associated with political reconciliation are great. When security issues weigh heavily in this transition, conflict avoidance measures provide an essential safety net for peacemaking. The implementation of these prior steps was intrinsically valuable and absolutely essential for the transition to confidence-building in US–Soviet relations and in the

Israeli–Egyptian peace process. Conversely, in regions where building blocks to CBMs have yet to be implemented, such as the Korean peninsula, the process remains stuck.

Conflict avoidance measures are also a necessary precondition to confidence-building because setbacks will inevitably occur during peacemaking. The process of political reconciliation will energize opposing forces, and opposing forces in tense regions often resort to violent means. Precursor steps can help contain the damage and make setbacks that occur less severe and long lasting.

Just as important, conflict avoidance measures can have a trampoline effect if and when peacemaking takes hold, allowing leaders to elevate political relations onto a higher plane. The transition from Cold War to unsettled peace in US–Soviet and Israeli–Egyptian relations came remarkably fast, considering the distances traveled. The rate of transformation was accelerated, in part, by channels of communication and patterns of cooperative behavior developed through precursor steps.

Mikhail Gorbachev and Anwar Sadat received international acclaim for their risk-taking strategies, but both paid a heavy price for their leadership. Nor did President Collor de Mello fare well, despite his path-breaking efforts. Does the fate of these national leaders suggest that future risk takers will be deterred from peacemaking and confidence-building?

A careful assessment of cause and effect is warranted here. The downfall of Collor de Mello was due to

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personal corruption, not CBMs. Argentine president Carlos Menem has been well served by his efforts to strengthen Argentine–Brazilian cooperation. Sadat’s death can clearly be tied to his efforts at political reconciliation, which were widely opposed within Egypt as well as by the Arab world. A decade later, however, his framework for peace with Israel has resulted in a peace agreement between Israel and the PLO. While Sadat’s legacy will be a source of debate for succeeding generations of Egyptians, his place in history is already secure outside the region.

Evaluations of Gorbachev’s downfall will continue for decades. Most assessments are likely to focus on the bankruptcy of the Soviet economy, the Communist party leadership, and communism as an ideology. The Stockholm accord and other CBMs may have accelerated the demise of a surprisingly brittle system, but so too did bloated US and Soviet defense spending, the Kremlin’s disastrous decision to intervene in Afghanistan, and a dozen other factors. As such, it is wildly inappropriate to credit or blame CBMs for Gorbachev’s failure and that of the Soviet system.

What, then, can be said of the political fortunes of those who wanted to make the transition from conflict avoidance to confidence-building? Only that the biggest risk takers lost the most in the near term, and will probably gain the most recognition and appreciation over time. Clearly, the negotiation of CBMs to accompany peacemaking can be the source of lasting credit, regardless of other leadership failures.

Few national leaders, however, are willing to tackle peacemaking in extraordinarily bold steps. A safer strategy is to employ smaller tests of trust—a process perfectly suited to CBMs. This process is obviously easier when there are no core issues in dispute, as in the Argentine–Brazilian case. Still, in this case, as in the US–Soviet and Israeli–Egyptian cases, breakthroughs were accomplished only after earlier tests of trust had been passed, and only at the initiative of confident, dedicated political leaders.

Every case of risk-taking for confidence-building and peacemaking is unique. Some national leaders may well be deterred from embarking on this path because their security problems are not ripe for solution, or because they lack domestic support, personal courage, or regional standing. There simply are no substitutes for the political will and the political base to assume the risks associated with the transition from conflict avoidance to confidence-building.

Occasionally, heroic efforts are called for, but true heroes at the presidential or prime ministerial level are a rare breed. Extremely tough decisions are unavoidable, however, when confidence-building must proceed in parallel with peacemaking, as is the case in the Middle East. Progress on the CBM front is also painfully slow in South Asia, which lags behind the

Middle East in the establishment of a durable channel to negotiate core issues. Fortunately, most national leaders face less daunting challenges when negotiating CBMs.

Stage Three: Strengthening the Peace

If formidable hurdles can be crossed to avoid war and then to negotiate a fragile peace, national leaders can continue to employ CBMs to strengthen the peace. Objectives at this stage of the process include broadening and deepening existing patterns of cooperation and making positive developments as irreversible as possible. The creation of properly functioning institutions to develop trade and cultural exchanges can be particularly helpful.

A number of security-related CBMs can also be usefully employed. Peace-strengthening measures might include constraints on the size and location of military exercises. Highly intrusive transparency measures, such as agreements to permit virtually unrestricted open skies and short-notice observations within military garrisons, could demonstrate non-hostile intent.

One way to measure progress in normalizing relations is to monitor the nature and number of exchanges between formerly hostile states. In 1992 the Israeli government of Yitzhak Rabin made a significant gesture to Cairo by returning archaeological objects collected by Moshe Dayan in the Sinai. US and Russian exchanges are now routinely carried out at nuclear weapons laboratories and bases. US and Chinese scientists have begun to carry out laboratory exchanges. In contrast India and Pakistan have agreed in principle to a regular exchange of military officers at each other's national defense colleges, but implementation has been held up for political reasons.

CBMs: A Tool for National and Regional Security

Confidence-building measures are pragmatic steps toward ideal objectives. Those steps will necessarily be small at the outset if serious grievances must be bridged. A broad CBM negotiating framework that facilitates linkages and trade-offs is advisable, but when central security concerns are at issue, military-related steps tend to dominate at the outset. Ultimately, however, success in negotiating CBMs in the military sphere will depend on multiple initiatives in the political, economic, cultural, and humanitarian realms.

The process naturally begins by identifying shared interests and developing an ethos of cooperation

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over time. CBMs can be molded to fit multiple needs, ranging from avoiding unintended escalation to making new wars unthinkable. An evolutionary step-by-step approach seems to work best, at least until core security issues must be tackled. It makes sense to start the process modestly, with steps that will widely be perceived as successful, not with suggestions that are offered in the confident expectation that they will be rejected. The CBM process can be encouraged with follow-up meetings, review conferences, and other techniques to institutionalize patterns of cooperation.

CBMs are gaining acceptance in many regions of the globe. They do not generate reflexive opposition except among those ideologically opposed to tension reduction measures. CBMs naturally commend themselves to national leaders who are both prudent and wise in the pursuit of national and regional security.

A successful CBM process involves creating a framework of principles, values, and objectives that will govern foreign relations. Building blocks can be symbolic as well as substantive. After all, when Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev declared that a nuclear war must never be fought and could never be won, they changed nothing and everything: while targeting plans remained constant after their declaration, the status of nuclear theologians on both sides began to plummet. The importance of symbolic gestures in confidence-building cannot be underestimated.

The record to date suggests uneven progress on the pursuit of CBMs within and across regions. In Europe, CBMs negotiated during the Cold War have proven to be remarkably useful in helping states adapt to a radically different environment. In Latin America and the Asia-Pacific region, CBMs have begun to play a more significant role in interstate relations. In Central Asia and Southern Africa, interesting initiatives are underway that draw on CBMs. Other regions, particularly the Middle East, South Asia, and most of Africa, progress has been quite limited.

Much work remains to be done. CBMs are ideal tools for the post-Cold War period, a time of great opportunity as well as potential for backsliding. It makes sense to promote CBMs in regions of tension and to compare CBM experiences in different regions to stimulate problem-solving approaches. Outsiders can provide useful help and general guidelines, but the heavy lifting must come from within regions of tension.

