Military Confidence- and Security-building Measures
Lessons from the Cold War for the Middle East

Hans-Joachim Schmidt

Abstract

The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis showed that the world was on the brink of a nuclear catastrophe and that systematic security coordination between the U.S. and the Soviet Union was urgently needed. The following era of détente paved the way for the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe which resulted in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and first voluntary confidence-building measures. After developing common principles and procedures, the security dialogue intensified and the scope of trust building expanded. The espousal of the policy of ‘glasnost’ (transparency) by new Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev finally broke the stalemate of the negotiations. With the 1986 Stockholm Document these strengthened measures became politically binding, militarily significant, and verifiable.

The primary goal of this Policy Brief is to understand the principles, objectives, and procedures which contributed to Cold War confidence building. Therefore, this issue examines the evolution of the East-West security dialogue and follows the path of military trust building from the 1950s to the beginning of the 1990s. It identifies lessons learned and assesses the transfer potential of trust-building initiatives to the volatile security situation of the Middle East – among them establishment of a structured regional security dialogue as a positive condition for making the Middle East Conference on a WMD/DVs Free Zone happen, successful, and sustainable.

Outline of This Policy Brief

This issue examines the evolution of the East-West security dialogue during the Cold War and follows the path of military trust building from the 1950s to the 1990s. The primary goal is to understand which principles, objectives, and procedures contributed to the establishment of the aforementioned agreements, and to identify the political conditions necessary for their successful implementation. Covering three different phases (1945-1962, 1962-1975, and 1975-1990), this Policy Brief follows the basic choreography of the Cold War. Finally, it shall be evaluated how far and under which conditions these lessons could be transferred to the Middle East and the Helsinki process on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery vehicles (DV).
The First Phase (1945-1962): Accelerating Confrontation

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the anti-Hitler-coalition broke up rapidly. The conferences of Yalta, Tehran, and Potsdam failed to resolve controversial issues: the allies fundamentally disagreed about the establishment and maintenance of post-war security as well as how the European map should look like. On the contrary, the military situation transformed to two blocs: the Soviets effectively occupied Central and Eastern Europe; the United States and Western allied forces remained in Western Europe; Germany was defeated and under four-power control.

From Allies to Adversaries

In the aftermath of the war, the Soviet Union consolidated its control over the states of the Eastern Bloc in order to create a security buffer against the re-emergence of a powerful Germany whereas the United States pursued a strategy of global containment to challenge Soviet power by extending military and financial aid to countries of Western Europe (Marshall Plan). In light of profound economic and political differences over capitalism and democracy, tensions between the superpowers grew steadily.

The Berlin Blockade (1948-1949) was the first major crisis of the beginning Cold War, which was only overcome by the massive airlift organized by the Western allies supplying West Berlin with food, materials, and other provisions. The United States, Britain, and France spearheaded the establishment of West Germany from their three Western zones of occupation in April 1949. In return, the Soviet Union proclaimed the German Democratic Republic in October of the same year. Moscow’s attempts to increasingly entrench its socialist system among its allies – especially the Soviet coup d’état in Czechoslovakia – were perceived by Western European countries as a threat to their security and in order to counter this menace the Western states set up a system of collective security by founding the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 – the same year of the first Soviet nuclear test.

With the victory of the Communist side in the Chinese Civil War and the outbreak of the Korean War (1950-1953), the conflict expanded as the Soviet Union and the United States now also competed for influence in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. West Germany entered NATO in May 1955 and the Soviets, who had already created a network of mutual assistance treaties in the Eastern Bloc, immediately established a formal alliance therein, the Warsaw Pact. The expansion and escalation of the Cold War sparked more crises delineating the two opposing sides of the Cold War even further in the following years: the 1953 East Germany uprisings and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution were brutally crushed by the Soviets and in 1961 the Berlin Crisis resulted in a stand-off between U.S. and Soviet tanks at the famous ‘Checkpoint Charlie’ crossing. The erection of the Berlin Wall literally cemented the division of the European continent.

Unsystematic Security Coordination between East and West

In Europe, the military missions of the four allied powers in Germany were still contributing to military confidence building by providing transparent information about force activities on German territory. On a global scale, however, nuclear arsenals grew steadily and after the development of intercontinental ballistic missiles both sides were in a position to strike the territory of the other – creating a situation of mutually assured destruction. While confrontation was intensifying, different avenues of coordination between the superpowers were attempted at the same time.

One of them was the 1955 Four Power Summit in Geneva with the stated mission to reduce international tensions and advance global security. East and West both used this conference to make first proposals for arms control and military confidence-building measures. The Soviets called for foreign troop withdrawals from Europe (in particular by the United States) and agreements on arms reductions. They proposed a “zone of limitation and inspection of armaments” including both East and West Germany as well as neighboring states. In view of Soviet conventional superiority in Europe, the Western powers demanded the “limitation of forces and armaments of comparable size and depth and importance on both sides of the line of demarcation between a reunified Germany and the Eastern European countries” – without foreign troop withdrawal. The most significant proposal in Geneva was, however, made by U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower: his ‘Open Skies’ plan called for mutual aerial inspections reassuring each country that the other was not preparing for an attack. This system of inspections was planned to be supplemented by special radar systems on NATO and Warsaw Pact territory, each manned by soldiers from the other side. These and other measures were also discussed three years later at the 1958 Geneva Surprise Attack Conference.

The security conferences ended without results, but they showed the different goals of the two blocs at that time: the West tried to change the territorial status quo in Europe by demanding the unification of Germany before it would accept security measures; the Warsaw Pact wanted security measures first in order to preserve the status quo before it was willing to discuss the unification of Germany. However, the security conferences marked an era of cautious optimism because they helped – despite opposing means and objectives – both sides to develop first guiding principles for any future security dialogue, one of them being to refrain from the threat or use of force. These developments also found expression in a first arms control agreement. Being unable to bridge their differences in Europe, the two superpowers started developing a common interest in preventing arms races in other regions and concluded in 1959 with the Arctic Treaty the first regional non-arms agreement. Any hopes for improved Cold War relationships, however, vanished in view of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

The Second Phase (1962-1975): From the Cuban Missile Crisis to the Establishment of a Permanent Security Dialogue and First Confidence-building Measures

The Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962 is generally regarded the moment in which the Cold War came closest to turning into a nuclear conflict. After the United States had placed nuclear missiles in Turkey and Italy, aimed at Moscow, and its attempt to overthrow the Cuban regime had failed, the Soviets started installing nuclear missiles in Cuba. U.S. intelligence revealed these preparations and President John F. Kennedy issued a military blockade while demanding the dismantlement of the Soviet weapons. Several Soviet ships tried to break through the blockade and a U-2 spy plane was shot down by Soviet forces. Threatening the superpowers with the risk of a nuclear war, President Kennedy and Soviet Leader Nikita Khrushchev resolved the crisis in secret back-channel negotiations on October 28, 1962: the Kremlin agreed to dismantle its missiles in Cuba and return them to the Soviet Union in exchange for an American public declaration not to invade Cuba. Secretly, Washington also agreed to withdraw all Jupiter missiles from Turkey and Italy.

These 13 days in October 1962 considerably changed the relationship between Moscow and Washington. It showed the necessity of a direct line of communication between the White House and the Kremlin aimed at...
avoiding such confrontation in the future. The crisis resulted in a growing readiness to attract more attention to the security interests of the other side. An era of political détente between the superpowers was cautiously initiated. An American working paper titled “Measures to Reduce the Risk of War Through Accident, Miscalculation, or Failure of Communication”9 and submitted to the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee, a forerunner of today’s Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament, proposed the establishment of such a direct link of communication. Though the Soviets had previously rejected the idea outside the framework of a larger disarmament agreement, representatives from both sides concluded the “Hot Line Agreement”10 which was signed and entered into force as the first formally agreed-upon confidence-building measure on June 20, 1963 – less than eight months after the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Building Confidence on the Continent: The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe

The relaxation of tensions between the superpowers led to a less confrontational situation in Europe and in 1966 the Warsaw Pact proposed an all-European conference on security and cooperation. The Eastern Bloc’s Bucharest Declaration contained proposals for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Europe, the reduction of the armed forces in the two German states and a German-German peace agreement as well as the establishment of denuclearized zones in Europe.11 The Eastern proposal favored a comprehensive improvement of East-West relations by curtailing the use of forces by CBMs, which should also include mutual inspections. NATO countries suggested negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) between both alliances in the 1968 Signal of Reykjavik as a quid pro quo for the European security conference the Eastern side demanded.12 But the Warsaw Pact’s invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 after the Spring of Prague caused a temporary interruption of the East-West dialogue.

In 1969, the Warsaw Pact renewed its call for a European security conference in the Appeal of Budapest, but this time in much more cooperative language. Several weeks later Finland offered to host the new European security conference and enlarged its agenda by including economic, technical, and scientific aspects. By the end of 1969 NATO countries broadened the agenda again by demanding the free movement of people, information, and ideas. Besides MBFR, the Western alliance also proposed advanced notification of maneuvers and troop movements, exchanges of observers at maneuvers, and the establishment of observer posts. Six months later the NATO Council accepted the first exploratory talks about a European security conference. In 1970, the WTO agreed to the participation of the United States and Canada in the security dialogue. The last obstacles for a serious security dialogue to start were finally removed when West Germany concluded the Moscow Treaty with the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty with Poland (both 1970) as well as the Basic Treaty (Grundlagenvertrag, 1972) with East Germany. In the latter, both German states recognized each other as sovereign states for the first time (two states in one nation) and both countries entered the United Nations in 1973.

The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) finally opened in Helsinki on July 3, 1973, with 35 participating states, to serve as a multilateral forum for dialogue and negotiation between East and West. In preparatory sessions, the participants already agreed to four basic baskets structuring the Helsinki process: first, security, including principles of interstate relations, trust-building steps, and Mutual Balanced Force Reductions; second, economic, scientific, technological, and environmental cooperation; third, cultural relations including free movement of people, information, and ideas; and fourth, the possibility to institutionalize the conference later.13

In the second phase, which was the main working period and was conducted in Geneva from September 1973 until July 1975, the responsible sub-committee was tasked to submit proposals on appropriate trust-building steps on prior notification and the exchange of observers at military maneuvers.14 The participants, however, had different approaches during the negotiations. The West favored arms control steps within the MBFR talks over CBMs. Washington and Paris were not willing to discuss military measures or constraints beyond maneuver notification/observation. The Warsaw Pact proposed that trust-building steps should only be mentioned in a statement of principles – the primary goal of the Soviet Union was the reassurance of the status quo in Europe after the Second

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World War. It was the group of the neutral and non-aligned (N+N) countries which had a strong interest in military confidence building. They did not participate in the arms control talks and therefore tried to gain as much as possible from the CBMs talks. Belgrade, for example, proposed constraints for military activities, which could raise tensions including the geographic staging of maneuvers, aircraft flights, vessels movements, and weapon tests. In the long term the N+N countries wanted to overcome the block confrontation and alliances and therefore believed in a new all-European collective security system.

The 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the Implementation of Confidence-building Measures

After two years of diplomatic meetings in Helsinki and Geneva, the CSCE reached agreement on the Helsinki Final Act, which was signed on August 1, 1975. The accord encompasses three main sets of recommendations: questions relating to security in Europe; cooperation in the fields of economics, of science and technology, and of the environment; and cooperation in humanitarian and other fields. The parallel MBFR talks, which initially had a much higher priority for NATO countries, did not produce significant results. With regard to Helsinki CBMs, the agreed-upon measures did not go beyond maneuver notification/observation and were of voluntary nature only. They included:

- Prior notification of major military maneuvers (by 25,000 troops) and minor maneuvers (below 25,000 troops) 21 days in advance (Soviet and Turkish territory was only included with a border zone of 250 km).
- Voluntary exchange of observers to major and minor military maneuvers.
- Prior notification of major military movements.

In addition to the voluntary nature of the agreement – it was neither legally nor politically binding – the Helsinki CBMs had a limited military value. In terms of territorial application, the Soviet Union was not willing to include its entire European territory in an effort to counter the fact that the U.S. soil was excluded. The prior notification of military maneuvers did only work to a certain degree, since they were not clearly defined in the Helsinki Accords. The exchange of observers to maneuvers was only randomly used – only eight out of 27 major maneuvers by the Warsaw Pact were observed in the ten years following the agreement. The poor record of maneuver observation was mainly due to missing criteria and rules which resulted in large variations and discrepancies in the actual conduct of the observations. On the other hand, the Soviet Union accepted foreign military observers on its territory for the first time and thereby guaranteed some initial transparency.

Although the Helsinki Final Act had limited value for military confidence building, the agreement established common procedures which were to govern future security cooperation. The first six out of the ten fundamental principles (the ‘Helsinki Decalogue’) focused on security: sovereign equality, refraining from the threat or use of force, inviolability of frontiers, territorial integrity of states, peaceful settlement of disputes, and non-intervention in internal affairs. In order to preserve the momentum generated by the historic East-West rapprochement, the Helsinki Final Act also provided for follow-up meetings to the CSCE. For these meetings, the participating states agreed that decisions to be based on consensus, the negotiation work to be conducted in a committee structure, and the chairs of the committees were to be occupied by all participating states in rotation. The Act also contained a development clause, which stated that the implementation of CBMs “could lead to developing and enlarging measures aimed at strengthening confidence.”

This provided a relatively stable and predictable framework for future security talks and facilitated further negotiations on confidence-building measures.


In order to keep the process flexible no permanent structures were created after Helsinki and during the first follow-up meeting, held in Belgrade from October 1977 to March 1978. Here, representatives exchanged views on the implementation of the provisions and principles of the Helsinki Final Act but could not reach consensus on a number of proposals submitted to the meeting. In May 1978, France called for a Conference on Disarmament in Europe – a proposal initially outside the scope of the CSCE process but later linked to it. The two-stage plan was at first to expand the territorial scope of Helsinki CBMs from the Atlantic to the Urals, followed by measures of conventional disarmament. The Warsaw Pact responded with a proposal for a Conference on Military Détente and Disarmament in Europe, accepting the two-stage approach but emphasizing the voluntary character of the Helsinki CBMs. The Eastern proposal was more directed towards the non-expansion of alliances, nuclear weapon free zones, and the no-first use of nuclear weapons, but it also called for lowering the major maneuver thresholds to 20,000 troops.

The second follow-up meeting was held in Madrid from November 1980 to September 1983 and considered a variety of proposals to further develop the Helsinki CBMs. It was, however, overshadowed by a phase of intensive reawakening of Cold War tensions arising from the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and the imposition of martial law in Poland in December 1981. While the period of détente between the United States and the Soviet Union culminated in the signing of the SALT I (1972) and SALT II (1979) agreements which regulated nuclear capacities, Soviet nuclear missile deployments in Europe in the late-1970s led to NATO’s double-track decision in 1979 and to the deployment of U.S. intermediate-range nuclear missiles (Pershing II) in Europe in 1983. In addition, with
the election of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and U.S. President Ronald Reagan in 1980, major Western countries abandoned détente in favor of a confrontational attitude towards the Soviet Union.

Despite growing tensions, the concluding document of the CSCE Madrid meeting called for a Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe. The envisaged aim was to “undertake in stages, new, effective and concrete actions designed to make progress in strengthening confidence and security and in achieving disarmament, so as to give effect and expression to the duty of states to refrain from the threat or use of force in their mutual relations.” The document further stipulated that the first stage of the conference would be held in Stockholm, Sweden, and would be devoted to “the negotiation and adoption of a set of mutually complementary confidence- and security-building measures designed to reduce the risk of military confrontation in Europe.” The mandate specified that these CSBMs would be of military significance and politically binding and provided with adequate forms of verification. While the territorial scope was a point of considerable controversy between East and West, the negotiators finally agreed that the CSBMs should be applicable to the whole of Europe – from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural Mountains.


The conference opened in Stockholm on January 17, 1984, but the first 18 months were dominated by intense debate on the purpose of the meeting itself. While NATO countries proposed concrete confidence- and security-building measures, the Soviet Union and its allies largely favored a declaratory approach to trust building. The stalemate was only broken with the espousal of the policy of ‘glasnost’ by the new Soviet Secretary General, Mikhail Gorbachev, who devoted his commitment to reversing the Soviet Union’s deteriorating economic condition instead of continuing the arms race with the West. In late 1985, the Stockholm conference formed working groups and in late summer of 1986, the Soviet Union finally accepted on-site inspections – allowing for a substantive outcome of the meeting.

At the closing plenary on September 19, 1986, the conference adopted the Stockholm Document by consensus. East and West agreed after almost three years of negotiations on trust-building steps that met the four criteria of the Madrid mandate, i.e. to be politically binding, militarily significant, verifiable, when possible, and applying from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural Mountains. These criteria, particularly those regarding verification and compliance, implied a major breakthrough compared to the voluntary character of the Helsinki CBMs and justified the new name given to these measures: confidence- and security-building measures. They included:

- Prior notification (42 days in advance) of military activities whenever they involve at least 13,000 troops or 300 battle tanks; 200 or more sorties by aircraft (excluding helicopters); and amphibious landing or parachute drops of at least 3,000 troops.
- Mandatory invitation of observers from all participating states to attend notified military activities above a threshold of 17,000 troops or 5,000 troops for amphibious landing or parachute assault.
- Exchange of annual calendars listing all notifiable military activities for the next year.
- Prohibition of military activities involving more than 40,000 troops unless announced a year in advance (excluding alerts) and military activities involving more than 75,000 troops unless forecast two years in advance.
- On-site inspection from the air or ground or both to verify compliance with agreed measures, with no right of refusal; no participating state must accept more than three inspections per year or more than one inspection from one state per year.

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The implementation record of the Stockholm Document was much better than of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. During the following five years the Warsaw Pact gave notification of more military activities than NATO (75 to 54) and invited observers to an almost similar number of activities (27 to 33) as the Western alliance.20 In light of continuing thaw in relations between the superpowers in the second half of the 1980s, the third follow-up meeting convened in Vienna from November 1986 to January 1989. They decided for additional negotiations on CSBMs starting in March 1989. The coverage of the CSBMs was again expanded and diplomatic efforts culminated in the 1990 Vienna Document, which also provided for the annual exchange of static and dynamic military information, including current and projected military budgets.21 To symbolically close the Cold War chapter of European history and, in the process, address the issues facing the “new” Europe, the CSCE states decided to convene a summit in Paris – the first one since Helsinki. It took place November 19-21, 1990, and was a historic event in that it formally recognized the end of the Cold War, only to-be-followed by the dissolution of the Soviet Union one year later.

Conditions of Success and CSBM Effectiveness: What Worked Why?

The Cuban Missile Crisis was the paramount game changer for the initial talks. With the end of the conflict formation the process for a security dialogue was initiated. However, in its first phase the security dialogue was irregular and embedded in an environment of parallel cooperation and confrontation. The Cuban Missile Crisis eventually helped change the political environment towards greater cooperation and the relaxation of tensions. In addition, the security interests of the other side received more attention. The N+N countries used the changed political environment to participate in the process and tried to support cooperation in order to bridge the antagonistic security structure in Europe as much as possible.

Politics and its altered priorities played an essential role. West Germany changed its foreign policy priorities to facilitate political cooperation between East and West. The goal of unification lost its priority and West Germany recognized the borders of the Soviet Union and Poland as well as accepted the existence of East Germany. The conditions of the Basic Treaty even regulated the cooperation with East Germany. Through such measures the West partially recognized the de facto division of Europe. This provided the Soviet Union with the necessary reassurance to accept a permanent security dialogue and some first voluntary CBMs.

The continuous security dialogue to overcome controversies and actual changes in policies were mutually reinforcing although NATO and Warsaw Pact had different approaches. The East was interested in the continued political division of Europe, whereas the West wanted to overcome this situation. However, with the establishment of a permanent security dialogue, both sides were able to develop common principles to guide this antagonistic process. Over time these principles began to work and their growing recognition steered and supported the process of military confidence building in Europe. Even in times of growing tension between the superpowers the dialogue continued uninterrupted. The Madrid mandate finally enabled negotiations on politically binding and military meaningful confidence- and security-building measures including their adequate verification in the whole of Europe.

Like the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, the new Soviet Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev was the crucial game changer towards the end of the East-West-conflict. While no one expected a quick implementation of the Madrid mandate, the policy of ‘glasnost’ by Gorbachev broke the stalemate of the CSBM negotiations. Committed to reversing the Soviet Union’s deteriorating economic condition instead of continuing the arms race with the West, he adopted the approach of military transparency and confidence building which enabled the conclusion of the Stockholm Document. While traditional statecraft honors ‘playing it safe’, Gorbachev is one example in history where a political leader was willing to take a politically risky ‘leap of trust’, guided by courage, conviction, and vision.22

CSBMs can be successfully negotiated even under different military doctrines. The tools and methods of confidence building were initially controversial. The Western states called for transparency and predictability on the Eastern ground forces because of their offensive doctrine and their quantitative superiority. These forces were decisive to conquering and to holding foreign territory and large military maneuvers, in particular near the border, and thus offered the opportunity for a surprise attack. Therefore, the prior notification of maneuvers and their observation led to increased predictability. The prior notification of amphibious landing and parachute assault maneuvers, which would be the forefront of an attack, even prolonged the warning time for the West. The Warsaw Pact for its part wanted more transparency and predictability on the superior air and sea forces of the NATO states. After the West agreed to include air and sea forces (under the condition that they support operations of ground forces), compromise became possible.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Against the backdrop of the described historical process and the identified conditions of success – what does this mean for the envisaged Helsinki process on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and of delivery vehicles in the Middle East? To be sure, one cannot ignore the specific characteristics of each region and time. However, several findings deserve to be taken seriously from the East-West context, since they could work as eye-opener and as an encouragement for actors on both the Track I and II levels.

Transfer Potential and Outlook

The findings of this Policy Brief can be separated into conceptual and generic ones. As to the conceptual (and at the same time more specific ones):

- Military confidence building and arms control cannot be decoupled from the general political and military relationship of the conflicting parties. This means that a relatively stable process of political détente is a necessary framework for the creation of a permanent security dialogue. CBMs are more likely if there are no major territorial conflicts or if they are managed
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Endnotes


3. On the partly blurring relationship between C(S)BMs and arms control as well as the different categories of CSBMs, ranging from non-demanding/modest to far-reaching, see the CSBM Framework presented in Policy Brief No. 18.

4. The ‘Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance’, more commonly referred to as the Warsaw Pact, was signed in Warsaw on May 14, 1955, by the Soviet Union, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, and East Germany.


9. The paper also proposed other measures such as the notification of military maneuvers, the establishment of a clearinghouse, ground and aerial observation, and overlapping radar systems. These suggested means of confidence building were neither agreed upon nor institutionalized but they have been the forerunner of subsequent C(S)BMs negotiated in the 1970s and 1980s. See Borawski (1988), p. 4; and John L. Gaddis (1997) We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 290-330.


18. The actual date of adoption was September 22. The clock at the conference was stopped by common consent in the early evening of September 19, when it was expected that extra time would be required to finalize the agreement. This step was necessary to satisfy the stipulation of the Madrid mandate that the conference end on September 19. See U.S. Department of State/ Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation (2013) Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe. Online, available at http://www.state.gov/t/isn/4725.htm (June 26, 2013).


Further Reading


East/Gulf, the concept of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and of delivery vehicles has proved to be much more dominant and sustainable. This is not surprising because it was not imported, but initiated in the region itself. Unfortunately, the region is missing a political leader with conviction and vision, willing to make the necessary first step even if this ‘leap in the dark’ involves serious risk-taking – similar to Egypt’s President Anwar al-Sadat flew to Jerusalem in 1977 in order to speak to the Knesset and accept Israel’s right to exist.

The second category of lessons are several fundamental issues associated with the East-West conflict, they should not be ignored as well:

- Conflict formations, paramount as they are, are not carved in stone – they are human made and can be changed accordingly.
- These processes take time – there were hardly any quick fixes – and therefore, patience is a must.
- Cooperation is possible among adversaries – and even countries hostile to each other may realize that the avoidance of (nuclear) war can constitute common interest; this was the central message of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

About the Academic Peace Orchestra Middle East (APOME)
The Orchestra is the follow-up project of the “Multilateral Study Group on the Establishment of a Missile Free Zone in the Middle East”. The Academic Peace Orchestra Middle East is a classical Track II initiative: it consists of some 100 experts – mainly from the Middle East/Gulf, one of the most conflict-ridden areas of the world. The Orchestra is meeting regularly in working groups (Chamber Orchestra Units) on specific topics in the context of a workshop cycle from 2011-2014. The main goal of this initiative is to shape the prospective Middle East Conference on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles agreed upon by the international community in May 2010. For this reason, these experts develop ideas, concepts, and background information in a series of Policy Briefs which are the results of intense discussions within the Chamber Orchestra Units. In this framework, the broader normative Cooperative Security Concept will be further developed, embedded, and institutionalized in the region. At the same time, the Orchestra meetings serve as venues for confidence building among the experts. The networking activities of PRIF’s Project Group are documented by the Atlas on Track II research activities in or about the Middle East/Gulf region.

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