

Chapter 2

Arms Control and Security Cooperation: Contending Approaches

Arms control is but one of a series of alternative approaches to achieving international security through military strategies. Although the basic idea of arms control has its roots in the nineteenth century, the rise of modern arms control as a theory and practice can be traced to the Cold War era as an outcome of the American-Soviet nuclear arms race. In fact, arms control started to assume considerable importance in the field of security studies toward the late 1960s when the two superpowers entered their *Strategic Arms Limitation Talks* (SALT) in Vienna and Helsinki in 1969 and concluded their first arms control agreement, SALT I, in 1972. Since then, the Americans, the Soviets and the Europeans have spent more than 30 years in discussing, negotiating, and signing different agreements on arms control in both the nuclear and the conventional fields.

It is important to distinguish arms control from disarmament. Although the two concepts might share some commonalities, one must treat them as two distinct terms with different assumptions and working mechanisms. In general terms, disarmament entails the elimination of certain classes of weapons from the arsenals of states. The *United Nations* (UN) General Assembly has defined the term as “the elimination of all WMD”, coupled with the “balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments, based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level”.¹ In return, the purpose of arms control is mainly regulatory, as it tends to put certain limitations on the acquisition, production, deployment and use of weapons. More specifically, arms control tends to “ban certain classes of weapons and weapons systems, place upper limits on the number of weapons that states may possess, limit the size and destructive power of weapons, ban the production of weapons that will increase the likelihood of war, and stop or at least slow the development of new technologies” (Griffiths and O’Callaghan 2002: 6). In *The*

¹ “Strengthening International Regimes for Arms Control and Disarmament”. Background Note prepared by the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, New York, 19–20 October 2004.

Control of the Arms Race, Bull (1965: 7), a classic arms control scholar, defined arms control as restraints internationally exercised on the development, use and employment of weapons. Booth (1987: 140–142) subscribed to the same view. He argued that whereas disarmament is revolutionary in focus as it is based on upturning the traditional processes of military security, arms control is more conservative in focus as it seeks to regulate such processes. Accordingly, the main objective of arms control is regulation rather than elimination of weapons systems. In fact, arms control can lead states to agree to increases in certain categories of armaments if such increases will contribute to crisis stability, and thereby reduce the chances of war.

In practice, arms control was devised during the Cold War period as an alternative to disarmament, which for many had fallen into discredit as a means of reducing the likelihood of war. The German disarmament experience is a case in point. Although Germany had been forced to disarm following World War I, this did not prevent it from becoming belligerent again, nor did it restrict its ability to go to war during the 1930s. In the early post-war period, the United States and the Soviet Union held a series of disarmament negotiations under the auspices of the UN. However, such negotiations did not go beyond formal propaganda, as the main focus of the superpowers became the arms race rather than disarmament. The turning point came in the mid-1950s when after years of discussion on the reduction of armaments and the elimination of nuclear weapons, the United States backtracked on its previous commitments to seek disarmament arrangements, arguing that “the advances in modern armaments, including nuclear weapons, have been so significant that much of the earlier discussions of the inspection and control problems may well be outmoded”.² The failure of disarmament negotiations to produce tangible results led eventually to the rise of a new thinking in the academic and policy circles concerned with the implication of the American–Soviet nuclear arms race. The new thinking replaced disarmament as an immediate goal with limited partial measures that would control the arms race and military power rather than eliminate them, since it held that elimination had proved to be unrealistic and even dangerous, and would not necessarily reduce the likelihood of war. In this context, whereas advocates of disarmament had formerly seen it as an alternative to military strength, arms control was now viewed as an integral part of military power, as its advocates sought to create a stable balance of power in which the forces that cause states to go to war could be controlled and regulated (Larsen 2002: 5–6).

Some analysts have also distinguished arms control from *confidence-building measures* (CBMs). The concept of CBMs refers to “collective arrangements about the function and use of military power in peacetime...designed to confirm non-aggressive intentions of all states and therefore build stable expectations

² Statement by Harold E. Stassen to the UN Disarmament Subcommittee, 6 September 1955. *Documents on Disarmament 1945–1959*, Vol. I. (Washington, DC: ACDA, 1960), p. 512.

concerning their military activities as instrument that rather deal with issues of military intensions and (mis)perceptions” (Rittberger et al. 1990: 70). This involves “the communication of credible evidence of the absence of feared threats by reducing uncertainties and by constraining opportunities for exerting pressure through military activities” (Holst and Melander 1977: 147). From an operational perspective, CBMs include measures such as (i) communication measures, i.e. the establishment of hotlines between the political and military leaderships; (ii) information measures, including the annual exchange of information on military forces, major weapon and equipment systems, and military budgets; (iii) notification measures, including the notification in advance of military manoeuvres and troop movements; (iv) observation measures, including the invitation of observers to major military manoeuvres; (v) compliance and verification measures, such as on-site inspections; and (vi) constraint measures, such as the establishment of demilitarized zones (Reich 1994: 240; Gunduz 1994: 188).

Although the very basic idea of confidence-building has its roots in the seventeenth-century peace of Westphalia and in many other subsequent agreements over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the rise of CBMs as a modern concept was officially endorsed in 1975 with the convening of the first meeting of the *Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe* (CSCE). The CSCE meeting adopted the Helsinki Final Act, which produced *The Document on Confidence-Building Measures and Certain Aspects of Security and Disarmament*. This was followed by the development of several generations of CBMs within the framework of the CSCE process.

Some scholars view CBMs as different from arms control. According to Holst (1987: 31), a classic CBMs analyst, arms control and CBMs are two separate concepts that adhere to different assumptions and mechanisms. He explained that CBMs “do not constitute substitutes for arms control, but they can pave the way for arms control and broaden and reinforce recognition of shared interests in the avoidance of war”. This distinction is valid when the concept of arms control is narrowly defined as an instrument that deals only with the actual reduction of armament. However, the line between arms control and CBMs becomes difficult to draw when arms control is broadly defined to include any military-related measures that seek to reduce the likelihood of war between adversaries. For example, in their seminal book *Strategy and Arms Control*, Schelling and Halperin (1985: 3) defined arms control as “all the forms of military cooperation between potential enemies in the interest of reducing the likelihood of war, its scope and violence if it occurs, and the political and economic costs of being prepared for it”. Gallagher (1998: 1–2) also employed a broader perspective, defining arms control to encompass “any type of cooperative measure meant to reduce the costs and risks associated with the acquisition, threat, and use of military force”. This includes “legally binding restrictions on particular weapons, reciprocal unilateral restraints on destabilizing capabilities or practices, and bilateral or multilateral efforts to address the root causes of insecurity”. According to these definitions, the difference between arms control and CBMs is blurred, as many CBMs could be then viewed as arms control arrangements.

This has led some scholars to view CBMs as one basic component of arms control, and more precisely as the operational side of arms control. They distinguish accordingly between two main types of arms control: (i) structural arms control, which regulates the types and amounts of weapons systems that states maintain, and (ii) operational arms control, which regulates the operations of military forces and military behaviour such as the level and scope of troop deployment and the rules of military exercises, and includes CBMs (Macintosh 1987: 16; Kemp 1991: 152, 179; Gray 1992: 9; McFate et al. 1994: 15–16; Krause 1997: 185–192; Tanner 2000: 190–191; Heller 2000: 160–162; Schofield 2000: 762). This book will subscribe to a broader arms control definition that contains both structural and operational dimensions. This definition has the merit of placing the question of arms control in its wider Middle Eastern strategic framework.

2.1 Theoretical Approaches

Members of the arms control community are deeply divided over basic questions such as the impact of arms control on the structure of inter-state security relations, the values that arms control should promote, and the means by which it can promote them. Conflicting assumptions about international politics are embedded in arguments over arms control even though they are rarely explicitly identified, contrasted, or tested against each other. In fact, one can conceptualize recent debates over the question of arms control in terms of four main approaches roughly defined by beliefs about the role of arms control in enhancing security and the means through which it can accomplish its objectives. These approaches could be categorized into two groups: academic versus policy-oriented approaches. The criterion of distinction is not the identity of the advocates, but rather the areas of emphasis. Scholars have advocated both academic and policy-oriented approaches. Accordingly, the distinction between the two categories is based on the main thrust of the argument, whether it is rooted in academic traditions and/or theories of international politics or it is more or less oriented towards the advocacy of a certain policy. Indeed, existing approaches are all advocated by academics, but their area of emphasis varies from one approach to the other. Further, some scholars advocate more than one approach at the academic and the policy-oriented levels. Sometimes, academics turn into advocates of certain policies or attempt to project their theories into actions, which explains the recurrence of certain names in more than one approach.

At the academic level, one can identify three major approaches. These include (i) the *Traditional approach*, which views arms control as an instrument of managing and stabilizing security relations between states (ii) the *Transformationalist approach*, which views arms control as an instrument of changing political perceptions as well as security relations between states, and (iii) the *Contextualist approach*, which relates the arms control process to the parameters of the strategic environment. At the policy-oriented level, one could refer to the *Relevancy*

approach, which addresses the relevancy/applicability of arms control to conflict-ridden regions. An in-depth analysis of these approaches is in order.

2.1.1 The Traditional Approach

This approach dominated the discourse of arms control for most of the Cold War era. Although there is no realist account of arms control in the literature, this approach is largely informed by the premises of contingent realism, an important variant of structural realism that seeks to explain why states might engage in cooperative arrangements.

At the far end of the realist spectrum lies structural realism which envisions no room for cooperation between states in an anarchic, self-help international system. According to this view, international anarchy forces states to worry about relative military power and to reject negotiation and the upholding of strategically significant limits on their military capabilities. Advocates of structural realism are therefore sceptical about the utility of arms control, as they view the balance of power as a self-sufficient and self-perpetuating system of international security which is to be preferred to arms control (Gray 1992).

In a partial deviation from structural realism, contingent realism does not take a purely zero-sum view of international politics and maintains that cooperation could be the preferred option for states under certain conditions. In his account of contingent realism, Glaser (1995) used the assumptions of structural realism to argue that rational state-actors in a self-help system would opt, under certain conditions, for cooperative policies. He assumed that anarchy is the main characteristic of the international system, and that sovereign states remain the main actors in international politics, have a mixture of conflicting and common interests, and prefer to depend primarily on self-help security strategies. Under these conditions, however, states might choose to cooperate in limited areas where they have common interests. This is especially the case when states face a situation of uncertainty about each other's military intentions. Although uncertainty generates insecurity, and therefore compels states, according to structural realism, to compete, Glaser argued that uncertainty could also create reasons for states to cooperate. Under conditions of uncertainty, states might prefer cooperation over competition if cooperation "reduces the adversary's insecurity by reducing the military threat it faces", or if it "can reduce the adversary's uncertainty, convincing it that the first state is motivated more by insecurity than by greed".

The policy implication of this argument is that states might agree to impose certain limitations on their armament and exchange information about military forces as a means of reducing insecurity and removing uncertainty, and accordingly stabilizing the balance of power system. Although advocates of this approach do not believe that a comprehensive cooperative security system is possible under a self-help system, they favour partial arms control measures within the framework of ad hoc agreements to address security problems that might lead adversaries into an arms race or war that neither side desires.

It is in this context that contingent realists establish a role for arms control in international politics. According to this account, the essential postulate of arms control is the recognition of the possibility of cooperation even between potential adversaries with respect to their military establishments. This cooperation, if it takes place, does not come at the expense of the military security of either actors, as sceptics of arms control would argue. Rather, arms control, if properly conceived, enhances security, especially in the nuclear age where the conception of a good military policy has changed from the purpose of winning wars to that of how to avert them. In this respect, the practice of arms control rests on a theory of crisis stability, which refers to the absence of military incentives to pre-empt under crisis conditions. This is achieved through two fundamental means.

The first means is by strengthening retaliatory, second-strike capabilities that would reduce the possibility of a considered, deliberate military attack. This is based on the assumption that the danger of war would be reduced if both sides were immune to surprise attack. As explained by Jervis (1993: 245), “A first-strike advantage, coupled with the belief that war is very likely, would make it rational for a state to attack even if it was peaceful because the alternative to attacking would be seen as being attacked. This means that the prospects of war will be reduced if both sides possess invulnerable second-strike capabilities.” A central goal of arms control in a bilateral or multilateral context is therefore to minimize first-strike advantages by encouraging the building of secure second-strike capabilities on both sides. The second means is by clarifying the military intentions of states in periods of peace and crisis by providing assurances regarding the purpose and character of military activities, in turn inhibiting opportunities for surprise attack, political intimidation, or the outbreak of war by misperception.

In this context, arms control is viewed as a ‘security management approach’ that aims at stabilizing inter-state security relations across specific parameters. According to this view, although the structure of inter-state relations is still influenced by deterrence and balance of power considerations, participating states would decide, for reasons of their own self-interest, to implement arms control measures in order to stabilize and to lower the cost of a military balance of power. Hence, arms control is to strengthen an existing balance of power, and is not a step toward replacing that balance of power with some different political structure. In other words, cooperation among states in the field of arms control is confined to the stabilization, and possibly the improvement (but not the change or elimination) of a deterrent relationship (Bowker and Williams 1985: 609–610; Rittberger et al. 1990: 70; Schofield 2000: 775; Brauch 2000: 31, 45).

This has led many Traditionalists to link arms control to the logic of security cooperation, rather than security regimes. Whereas cooperation in the context of security regimes takes the form of an institutionalized structure with formal commitments to the implementation of a set of agreed rules and principles, the concept of security cooperation is more flexible in nature since it could include both formal (institutionalized methods of cooperation) and informal cooperation where states might choose to cooperate on specific tactical issues for mutual benefit without committing themselves to the development of formal structures of cooperation.

It is due to this formal/informal nature that cooperation in the field of security becomes possible between both allies and adversaries, with formal structures of cooperation being more common between allies, while informal cooperation is the preferred option between adversaries. Accordingly, the fact that arms control is employed between states to avoid crisis escalation and/or war by misperception in an adversarial security environment, while not affecting the traditional security paradigm, makes arms control more compatible with the concept of security cooperation rather than security regimes.

2.1.2 The Transformationalist Approach

Despite its dominance in the field over the past few decades, the Traditional approach was challenged by a number of scholars whose thinking was largely influenced by the end of the Cold War and the beginning of a new strategic East–West relationship by the early 1990s. The peaceful end of the Cold War, along with the conclusion of a series of American–Soviet arms control agreements over the 1970 and 1980s, brought with it a new understanding of the functions of arms control. According to this, arms control was viewed as a set of instruments that not only maintained the stability of East–West relations during the Cold War but also paved the way for the transformation of these relations (Krause 1997: 191). The impact of arms control, it is argued, was not limited to the achievement of narrow strategic objectives such as avoiding surprise attack and inadvertent escalation, but rather extended to include the transformation of East–West security relations towards cooperation and mutual confidence (Attina 2001: 29–30).

This view is largely influenced by the school of liberal institutionalism; a variant of the liberal paradigm of international relations. This school emphasizes the centrality of international regimes for ensuring free interaction among actors and global application of norms. Some of the advocates of this model have introduced the concept of ‘cooperative security approach’, according to which states would seek to cooperate in the maintenance of security. This is done through working out a set of collectively binding agreements and normative rules with the purpose of regulating their behaviour within specific-issue areas. In other words, individual states would maintain their security through institutionalized cooperation for the collective handling of problems or conflicts (Haggard and Simmons 1987: 495; Attina 2001: 20–28). Liberal institutionalism has, therefore, moved international security from a system based on deterrence to a new system based on reassurance and transparency.

In this context, proponents of the Transformationalist approach reject the traditional understanding of arms control as limited and incomplete. Instead, they view arms control as one avenue of cooperation among states that leads to the removal of the security dilemma. This is achieved by linking the development and implementation of arms control to a process of transformation in the way participating states think about security relations. Accordingly, the function of arms control

goes beyond the stabilization of military balances to include a process of change in the political perceptions of states as well as in the content of their security relations (Macintosh 1996: 31).

The Transformationalist approach also distinguishes between the activity (process) and the end product (measures) of arms control negotiations. According to this view, arms control is conceptualized as a distinctive activity entailing a comprehensive process of exploring, negotiating, and implementing a set of military-oriented measures between states. This activity goes beyond the operationalization of an arms control agreement, and thus should not be confused with what the measures themselves do. It includes three main processes that reinforce each other in triggering the desired political and security transformation. These are: (i) the development/exploration phase, in which the question of arms control is explored and debated informally between academics and security experts on both sides. This debate can take place within the framework of academic conferences, workshops and joint research projects, meetings between journalists or civil society representatives, and military-to-military meetings; (ii) the negotiation phase, in which informal forums and non-governmental discussions are replaced by formal negotiations on specific arms control proposals; and (iii) the implementation phase, in which the participating states implement a negotiated arms control agreement. The argument here is that even though contending states might not accept arms control measures that do more than codify existing defence plans, the countless hours spent on exploration, negotiation and exchange of ideas help both sides recognize their interdependence, understand each other's security concerns, and realize the need for a fundamentally more cooperative approach to security. This multidimensional process of arms control activity is expected to pave the ground for the transformation of security relations from adversarial relations dominated by suspicion and mistrust to a moderated and more cooperative pattern of relations (Macintosh 1996: 36; Steinberg 2004: 263–267; Desjardins 1996: 18).

In this respect, arms control is conceptualized by the proponents of the Transformationalist approach as a change-oriented measure that could trigger a change in the strategic environment between contending parties. The occurrence of this change, however, is not automatic. Rather, it is linked to the presence of a number of supporting conditions, including (i) an overall dissatisfaction with the status quo, its costs, and its security implications among policymakers on both sides; (ii) the presence of a network of experts (epistemic community) that cuts across official and academic lines and is willing to explore and promote the ideas of arms control within the contending states. The significance of the epistemic community is that it can provide policymakers who are dissatisfied with the status quo with new options, including arms control, for dealing with the security problem; and (iii) the occurrence of a positive shift in existing political thinking from an excessive reliance on traditional security schemes toward the adoption of more cooperative security ideas. This entails the rise of a new generation of mid-level, flexible policymakers who are more willing to embrace new, cooperative ways of maintaining security (Macintosh 1996: 37–38).

Advocates of the Transformationalist approach also view arms control from an international regime perspective. Conceptualized as an instrument that would create new standards of behaviour (norms) for the rules of political engagement and the management of security relations, arms control is thus linked to the establishment of international security regimes. The linkage is established not in the sense of having arms control creating a legal framework comparable to international law, but in the sense of establishing a quasi-law in the form of mutually agreed rules of the game or code of conduct which allow for building confidence and the creation of more cooperative patterns of maintaining security among the participating states. In this respect, the concept of arms control has become an integral part of the model of international regimes and the idea of an arms control regime has been introduced.

2.1.3 The Contextualist Approach

The Contextualist approach addresses the question of arms control from a different perspective. In the Traditionalist–Transformationalist debate, scholars diverge on the impact of arms control on inter-state security relations. Whereas the Traditionalists contend that arms control is to stabilize these relations along the parameters of deterrence and balance of power, the Transformationalists argue that arms control can change/transform such relations from adversarial to more cooperative patterns. In this context, arms control is treated as a prelude to other political and military developments. The policy implication of these propositions is that arms control, once applied in a bilateral or multilateral context, will affect existing patterns of security relations between states, either by stabilizing or transforming them. In the Contextualist approach, however, arms control is viewed as a reflection, rather than a cause, of the regional or global setting in which it is introduced.

Proponents of the Contextualist approach question some of the propositions underlying the concept of arms control; chiefly among these is the proposition that armaments contribute significantly to the outbreak of war. According to this proposition, arms races are viewed as an important link in the process of conflict escalation, which is likely to result in the outbreak of war between opposed powers. The policy implication here is that arms races should be brought under control and eventually reversed if war is to be avoided. However, for the advocates of the Contextualist approach, this conclusion is not without limitations. This is because whereas armaments are among the conditions that enable wars to take place, they do not necessarily produce war, or provide in themselves a means of distinguishing the conditions of war from the conditions of peace. In fact, not all arms races have been followed by wars. Instead, some races have come to an end, as was the case with the American–Soviet arms race during the Cold War. Even in cases of war, the fact that some wars were preceded by arms races could suggest a correlation between the two variables, but it does not guarantee the existence of a causal relationship. In addition, historical experience shows that the application of arms control, particularly CBMs, in bilateral or multilateral settings has not always been

met with success. In some cases, arms control has failed to achieve its desired objectives, either those related to conflict management and crisis stability or those related to the changing of political-security perceptions.

Further, arms races may be outcomes rather than causes of conflicts. The conflict of interests and the perception of grievances on the part of some of the contending parties may motivate them to arm in order to rectify perceived injustices. In this case, an emphasis on the arms race without reference to the underlying causes of the race might lead to misleading conclusions. What follows is that any attempt to establish an arms control regime must take into account the wider regional context in which such a regime is to be installed (Tuchman 1984: 13–14). Arms control does not automatically improve or eliminate antagonistic security structures that are determined by opposing interests or even hostility. Rather, this impact is largely determined by the occurrence of certain developments in the regional political and security environment, which, in return, act as the enabling conditions for arms control. This makes the Traditionalist–Transformationalist debate over the impact of arms control on security largely irrelevant to the analysis as it does not address the conditions under which arms control becomes applicable within a conflict situation.

In fact, advocates of the Contextualist approach have come up with different assessments of the enabling conditions for arms control. In his classical work, Bull (1965: 7–10, 65–79) identified three important conditions that make regional settings conducive for the establishment of arms control regimes. These include (i) that the powers concerned want a system of arms control; (ii) a measure of political détente among them sufficient to allow for a system of arms control; and (iii) a mutual interest in the military situation that the arms control process will legitimize. Richter (1994: 72) subscribed to a similar view. He contended that arms control, especially CBMs, are most likely to have little or no impact on eliminating the causes of tensions and improving security relations between states if they are not introduced within the proper political context. Richter emphasized the element of détente as an essential precondition for the successful application of CBMs, arguing that CBMs cannot in themselves eliminate structures of antagonistic security relations. Accordingly, CBMs have the potential to create cooperative security structures only when they are introduced within the context of a comprehensive process aimed at gradually eliminating political differences.

Blacker and Duffy (1984) also contended that arms control must be preceded by the creation of mutually acceptable military conditions, since no country will accept or comply with treaties unless they are in its own interests. According to their analysis, progress in arms control can only be achieved with the existence of a balance of power between the contending parties. Blacker and Duffy supported their argument with reference to the historical experience of arms control. In the Cold War arms control process, the launching of the first arms control talks between the two superpowers in 1969 and the conclusion of the SALT I agreement in 1972 and other subsequent agreements became possible after the reaching of a strategic balance of power between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. For most of the 1960s, the Soviet Union was suspicious of entering into any arms control talks

with the United States because of Soviet relative nuclear inferiority and the fear that arms control would perpetuate such inferiority. It is only when the Soviets were in a process of achieving nuclear strategic parity with the United States by 1969 that they expressed willingness to negotiate arms control agreements. With the reaching of the balance of terror, the question of arms control gained momentum in the policy and military circles of both NATO and Warsaw Pact as a means of controlling the nuclear arms race and of preventing a deadly nuclear confrontation. The fear of mutual destruction convinced the United States and the Soviet Union that a limitation on their nuclear weapons was in their best interest.

A similar pattern could also be observed in other arms control agreements before World War II. These included (i) the 1817 American–British Rush–Bagot agreement on the reduction of their naval forces on the Great Lakes. The agreement, described by Blacker and Duffy as “the most successful disarmament effort of the nineteenth century”, was concluded and sustained within a framework of naval parity between the United States and Britain; and (ii) the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty between Britain, the United States, Japan, France and Italy on halting the construction of new capital ships and aircraft carriers over a ten-year period, and its extension in the London Naval Treaty of 1930 between Britain, the United States and Japan. The Washington treaty created naval parity between Britain and the United States by limiting the total tonnage of their capital ships to 500,000 tons for each, while it put Japan, France and Italy at a disadvantage by limiting their capital ships’ total tonnage to 300,000, 175,000, and 175,000 respectively. This uneven distribution of naval capabilities led eventually to the collapse of the Washington and London naval systems. Whereas France and Italy expressed reservations about the distribution ratio and blocked efforts in 1927 to extend the agreement to cover cruisers and auxiliary vessels, Japan became more unsatisfied with the agreements, arguing that they would perpetuate its naval inferiority vis-à-vis the United States and Britain. In 1934, Japan formally withdrew from the Washington and London agreements, and in 1935 the two agreements practically collapsed when the London Naval Conference concluded a new agreement that virtually reversed the limitations stipulated by the 1922 and 1930 agreements.

Bromley and Perdomo (2005) viewed the enabling conditions from a different perspective, arguing that arms control is largely dependent on two interrelated factors. The first is the type of regime. According to their analysis, stable democratic regimes are important to ensure accountability and commitment to arms control agreements, whereas in weak democracies or non-democratic regimes, arms control obligations are less likely to be met in a consistent and coherent way. The second is the existence of a shared political culture among the states involved. States with similar political cultures are more inclined to respect their commitments under cooperative frameworks, including arms control regimes. In areas with antagonistic political cultures, there is a high risk of divergence, and this could limit the potential impact of arms control. In the absence of these conditions, the authors argue, there is a tendency to question states’ commitment to the implementation of arms control agreements, as well as a higher probability of cheating.

2.1.4 The Relevancy Approach

The Relevancy approach addresses the question of the applicability of operational arms control (CBMs) in other conflict-ridden regions outside Europe. Under this approach, one can articulate two general trends. The first trend, which is more dominant in the literature, suggests that the European experience of CBMs could be applied in other regions. This suggestion has some methodological relevance. One of the major assumptions of social science research is that human behaviour is patterned. Human experiences occur in the form of patterns and, therefore, they are generalizable. In this context, one of the objectives of social science is to discover these patterns and use them to explain future human behaviour. With this basic assumption, some analysts have introduced the notion of trans-regional learning, which refers to the possibility of drawing inferences from one region and applying them to others, with arguments that the experience of one region could be used to understand the dynamics of other regions. Accordingly, they have advocated the applicability of the European experience of CBMs to other non-European regions, emphasizing that European-style CBMs can stimulate problem-solving approaches in other geographical settings. According to the advocates of this trend, as CBMs had succeeded in stabilizing East–West relations and in setting the ground for the peaceful end of the Cold War, these measures could also achieve similar successes in other conflict-ridden regions.

This view has been advocated by a number of scholars, both from the Traditionalist and Transformationalist camps. For example, Brauch (2000a: 333–334), a strong advocate of the Traditionalist approach, maintained that CBMs are important tools for crisis stability in different regions of the world. He paid special attention to the southern Mediterranean region as one of the most unstable and conflict-ridden regions in the world, arguing that the region is in need for CBMs in order to defuse tension in times of crisis. Kemp (1991: 170–181) from the Transformationalist camp emphasized the significance of CBMs in the Middle East region. He advocated the application of CBMs and structural arms control measures between Israel and her Arab neighbours in order to trigger a process of change towards the resolution of existing conflicts and the prevention of future ones. Ahmar (2001: 43) also contended that CBMs might be a European creation, but the philosophy and content of CBMs should not be restricted to the European context. He explained that “CBMs do not have an inclination towards any specific community or group, but possess the ability to deal with other crises and conflicts in different parts of the world”. He added that “The concept of CBMs originated in the West but its application is universal in nature”.

The second trend rejects the notion that CBMs are universal conflict-management or conflict-resolution tools. This trend is largely informed by the assumptions of the Contextualist approach, and also has some methodological relevance. Despite the significance of trans-regional learning, social scientists have warned against “the use of geography on the assumption that the various areas are the same” (Simon 1978: 179–181). Geographical differences must be taken into

account if one is to make valid inferences and generalizations. In other words, geographical regions must be similar in the most crucial dimensions in order to be able to compare these regions or draw inferences from one region and apply them to others. Further, one of the pillars of social science research is the concept of antecedent variables, which refers to “the kinds of conditions under which the original relationship was at least and most likely to occur, and the kinds of processes that were involved in the operation of the original relationship” (Selltitz et al. 1976: 45). Accordingly, social scientists argue that in validating a relationship, one must specify the conditions or contingencies necessary for the occurrence of the relationship. Such conditions (contexts) include three major elements: interest and concern, time and place, and background characteristics. People differ in their concerns and interests, which in turn affects their attitudes and behaviour patterns. In addition, a relationship between two variables can vary according to the time and place in which it is studied. Similarly, associations are likely to differ for persons or groups that do not share the same characteristics (Nachmias and Nachmias 1992: 410–412).

In this context, proponents of the second trend argue that CBMs are a European phenomenon that emerged within a particular political and historical context in order to serve European security requirements. Conflicts in other regions of the world, it is argued, have different dynamics from those of the East–West conflict during the Cold War, and, as a result, CBMs could not address the security problems of other conflict-ridden regions. This led Richter (1994: 73) to warn that any attempt to employ CBMs in other regional (non-European) settings must be made with caution. He built his argument in light of two important factors. The first is the profound differences between the political structure of Europe during the Cold War and that of most developing regions, with the latter being usually characterized by cross-cutting conflict dyads, unstable patterns of conflict, incomplete state formation, and weak sub-regional integration. These characteristics would make it very difficult to implement CBMs since the “transaction costs for the establishment of an all-regional conference process would likely be very high, whereas the capacity of individual states to raise the funds to pay for these costs is low”. The second is the political and historical preconditions of CBMs, which are generally lacking in the developing world. Whereas Europe witnessed a high degree of mutual strategic deterrence, and a process of political normalization that led to the renouncement of violent change of existing borders, prior to the rise and implementation of CBMs, most, if not all, other regional settings have lacked such strategic developments. Richter went further to warn against the potential negative outcomes of projecting CBMs to other regions:

Analysts should recognize that the effort to implement CBMs in other regions can become counter-productive, effectively reducing the level of confidence and trust in the interactions of various regional actors, rather than improving it. This is because a poorly executed and conceived attempt to develop a confidence-building regime can precipitate the very types of suspicion, mistrust, and misperception that confidence-building is supposed to correct (Richter 1994: 62).

2.2 Assessment of the Arms Control Approaches

No doubt, these scholarly approaches shed light on important dimensions of arms control and its functions in conflict situations. However, one could raise a number of critical remarks about the arms control literature in terms of its theoretical assumptions, methodological basis, and the domain of analysis. These include the following:

2.2.1 *Eurocentric Accounts*

The arms control literature depends excessively on the Cold War experience of arms control as the main domain of analysis. Although arms control might find some grounds for exploration and application in a number of developing regions, these efforts have not received enough attention in the literature as they have been too limited in scope and/or they have not succeeded in laying the foundation of a genuine arms control regime. This Eurocentric view is particularly evident in the CBMs literature, which treats the European experience as the main, if not the only, testing ground for drawing theoretical and policy-oriented conclusions. This trend, however, could be criticized on two main grounds.

First, although the concept of CBMs emerged officially within the framework of the European CSCE process in 1975, the idea of CBMs was not unfamiliar to a number of developing regions over the past few decades, and even before the conclusion of the Helsinki process. An obvious example here is the Israeli–Egyptian CBMs which were implemented in the context of the first and second disengagement agreements in 1974 and 1975 respectively, and the Egyptian–Israeli peace treaty in 1979. Under the peace treaty, a comprehensive set of ‘CBMs’ were applied on both sides of the Egyptian–Israeli borders. This included the establishment of demilitarized zones, hotlines, limitation of forces, early warning stations in designated areas, and monitoring, surveillance and inspections of military formations and troop movements.³ In fact, the Egyptian–Israeli experience of CBMs represents one of the most successful examples of CBMs outside Europe.

One could also refer to other success stories of CBMs, which include (i) the Russian–Chinese agreement to develop a CBMs regime for their border region as part of a comprehensive agreement signed between the two countries, as well as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and the Kyrgyz republic, in 1996, and (ii) the development of a number of legally binding CBMs agreements in Latin America, the most important of which were the 1997 Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, and the 1999 Inter-American Convention on Transparency in

³ For a detailed review of CBMs within the context of the Egyptian–Israeli Peace Treaty, see the text of the “Egyptian–Israeli Peace Treaty”, 1979; available at: <http://www.mideastweb.org/egyptisraeltreaty.htm>.

Conventional Weapons Acquisitions. Whereas the first agreement focused on enhancing military stability and accountability, the second was directed towards inter-state security and crime prevention.

Second, the fact that CBMs had limited, or even unsuccessful applications in non-European settings does not suggest that these cases are irrelevant to the analysis. Rather, such cases could provide meaningful insights into the analysis of CBMs, and particularly the study of the potential constraints that might hinder the application of CBMs within conflict situations. This is the case, for example, with the Middle East and South Asia. Since the outbreak of the Arab–Israeli and Indo-Pakistani conflicts in the Middle East and South Asia respectively, the two regions had experienced the application of several types of CBMs for the purpose of ending military confrontations and reaching a political solution through third party mediation and direct negotiations. In the Middle East, CBMs began with the end of the first Arab–Israeli military confrontation in 1948 and have continued ever since at different intervals, although they were not labelled as such until the end of the Cold War. These measures were included within formal and informal agreements between the parties to the conflict. With the end of the Cold War, the jargon of CBMs reappeared at a much higher level in the Arab–Israeli discourse as a result of the beginning of the Madrid peace process in 1991 and subsequent negotiations between the parties to the conflict. The resurgence of CBMs was also a result of Euro-American initiatives to transfer the Helsinki process to the Arab–Israeli conflict. In South Asia, several CBMs were also included within formal bilateral agreements between India and Pakistan in order to end the state of war and reach a political solution to the Kashmir problem. Indeed, one could describe CBMs in the Middle East and South Asia as the fastest-growing business witnessed by the two regions over the second half of the twentieth century.

However, CBMs proved to be a failing business in the Middle East and South Asia, both of which still exist today as among the most conflict-prone regions in the world. Except for the Egyptian–Israeli ‘CBMs’ in 1979, all CBMs introduced in the context of the Arab–Israeli conflict during the Cold War failed to prevent the outbreak of military confrontations between the antagonists. Post-1949 measures were not an impediment to the outbreak of the 1956 Suez war, and post-1957 measures did not block the June 1967 war. These measures prevented specific crises, but did not lead to the resolution of the conflict, did not remove misperceptions, and did not even constrain the ability of some of the parties to go to war. Further, the post-Cold War CBMs initiatives achieved limited success. Whereas Israel endorsed them, the Arabs perceived them as instruments for consolidating Israeli military hegemony and occupation of their territories, and thus were reluctant to accept them. In South Asia, CBMs also proved to be a failing business. Despite decades of institutional CBMs between India and Pakistan, there still exists deep-rooted suspicion, dispute, and insecurity between the two countries. CBMs did not also safeguard against the eruption of crises or the escalation of conflicts. Almost each round of CBMs was followed by a round of military confrontation. Although the two parties have not gone to war against each other since 1971, they have clashed several times over Kashmir in the form of ‘small-scale confrontations’.

This failure of CBMs raises a number of questions regarding the role of CBMs in the process of conflict resolution; chief among them are (i) why did CBMs succeed in the European context, but fail in the Middle East and South Asia? and (ii) do CBMs represent a Western phenomenon that serves specific European security requirements and thus are not applicable to other non-European regions, or do they act as universal tools that could be imitated in other conflict-ridden regions but whose application is linked to the presence of a conducive political and strategic context? No doubt, an examination of why CBMs have not been successful in some parts of the world should help us to move beyond European boundaries, and, accordingly, to enrich our theoretical understanding of the concept and its dynamics.

2.2.2 Lack of Well-Developed Theoretical Accounts

The arms control literature is characterized by the lack of theoretical accounts that help explain the dynamics of arms control in conflict situations or within the framework of the conflict resolution process. In fact, one could argue that the field has witnessed limited academic effort addressed at locating the concept of arms control within a larger theoretical framework. The focus, instead, tends to be on the empirical dimension and policy implications of arms control. This makes the literature largely atheoretical as it does not possess a well-established theoretical perspective to structure an understanding of the dynamics of arms control.

For example, the Relevancy approach is essentially atheoretical, as it deals with the viability of arms control for conflict resolution in specific areas. The Traditional approach also does not show *how* and *why* arms control works between states. For example, if the main function of arms control is to stabilize an existing deterrent relationship, does this mean that arms control is an attractive instrument to any two members of a dyad whose interaction is stipulated by a deterrent relationship, or are there certain (intervening) factors that should be present in order to arouse interest in arms control as a stabilizing instrument? Further, if arms control is to achieve crisis stability, remove misperceptions and reduce insecurity between contending states, then why has it little more than minimal impact on political and security perceptions in an unpredictable security environment?

Similarly, the Transformationalist approach has theoretical shortcomings. Although it tries to address many of the pitfalls of the Traditional approach by insisting on asking *why* and *how* arms control is expected to produce a certain impact on inter-state security relations, the Transformationalist approach also leaves many important questions unanswered. For example, in arguing that the impact of arms control is linked to the occurrence of a 'positive shift' in political thinking, the Transformationalist approach does not address the following questions: (i) what are the factors responsible for the occurrence of such a positive shift? (ii) are these factors linked to changes within the domestic environment, such as the change of leadership, or are they linked to changes at the regional level, such as a shift in the balance of power or the settlement of political

differences? (iii) how can the contending parties realize that a positive shift in political thinking is taking place? (iv) are there any signs that could help identify this shift? and (v) if so, what are these signs? Indeed, Macintosh (1996: 66), a strong advocate of the Transformationalist approach, recognized many of these shortcomings when he admitted that this approach should not be viewed as constituting a theory of international relations, despite efforts to place it within the broader accounts of international institutions. Instead, he recognized the approach as a “much more modest and limited conceptual creation”.

In addition, one could argue that the most serious theoretical problems are to be found in the Contextualist approach. Although it addresses an important dimension of the arms control debate by looking into the enabling conditions for arms control, there is no consensus among the advocates of this approach on defining these conditions. Whereas some scholars view political détente as the most important for an arms control process to start, others contend that it is the balance of power which matters, arguing that the achievement of strategic equilibrium between states leads to a reduction of tensions and the creation of a general atmosphere of political détente, which eventually paves the way for an arms control process to begin. Still a third group of scholars contends that a shared democratic culture is the key requirement for the success of arms control. Also, the Contextualist approach does not address the exact link between the enabling conditions and arms control. Does the application of arms control follow directly after the enabling conditions materialize, or does it also depend on the presence of other variables in either the domestic or regional environments? More importantly, the Contextualist approach does not examine the impact of arms control, once applied, on the structure of political and security relations between the participating states. Does arms control function as a measure oriented towards the status quo and seeking the stabilization of security structures across specific parameters, or does it act as a change-oriented measure whose purpose is to transform existing structures? Does arms control function as a tool for crisis stability, conflict management, or conflict resolution? In other words, if the Contextualists criticize others for not paying attention to the political and strategic context under which arms control should operate, they themselves have fallen into the trap of not addressing the role of arms control between states.

2.2.3 Failure to Recognize Complexity Within Operational Arms Control

The literature treats operational arms control as a unitary concept. Although the literature classifies CBMs into different categories, such as communication, notification, and inspection measures, it fails to acknowledge the differences between these categories regarding their impact on political-security structures as well as the conditions under which they could be introduced. Instead, the classification is made for the mere purpose of distinction, with no attempt made to analyse how and why each category works in a given conflict situation. This is the case, for example, with

(i) communication measures, such as hotlines, and (ii) inspection measures, such as on-site inspection. Although both measures are classified as CBMs, each deals with different security requirements, which means that the preconditions for their application are also different. On the one hand, hotline measures are considered the fastest-growing CBMs in terms of application because they are seen as harmless and risk-free, and thus they are the most attractive to states involved in adversarial relations. On the other hand, inspection measures are considered the least common because they deal with the verification of actual military activities and structures, and thus they are seen as involving 'potential' risks for national security and state sovereignty. Accordingly, the application of verification measures require the existence of a moderate and more cooperative pattern of relations between the participating states in order to be able to overcome any possible rise of threat perceptions.

Indeed, historical experience shows that different types of CBMs have served different purposes under specific political and strategic contexts. In Europe, the progression of CBMs within the framework of the CSCE process was a response to the gradual development of East–West relations to more cooperative patterns towards the late 1970s and 1980s. In 1975, the Helsinki Final Act officially adopted the first generation of CBMs in what became known as *The Document on Confidence-Building Measures and Certain Aspects of Security and Disarmament*. The Document endorsed the application of a number of CBMs among the CSCE members, including (i) prior notification of major military manoeuvres, (ii) prior notification of other military manoeuvres (less than 25,000 troops), and (iii) exchange of observers. The Document stipulated that states conducting military manoeuvres should invite other CSCE states, voluntarily and on a bilateral basis, to send observers to attend the manoeuvres.⁴ However, the Helsinki Document occasioned a number of critical remarks, the most important being the non-binding character of CBMs and the absence of verification provisions. This meant that a CSCE member state could conduct military manoeuvres without notifying other members. There was also no mechanism whereby each party could verify the information received from the other. This created the fear that CBMs could be used by the protagonists as tools for deception, provoking false confidence.

These concerns motivated the CSCE countries to come up with the second generation of CBMs in the CSCE Stockholm Conference of 1986 in what became known as the *Conference on Confidence and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe* (CDE). The Stockholm Document strengthened the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act and extended the scope of CBMs to the area of verification. In Stockholm, the CSCE participants agreed on (i) extending the time for prior notification from twenty-one to forty-two days, and manoeuvres of a minimum of 13,000 men instead of 25,000 were subject to prior announcement, (ii) the exchange of annual calendars for military activities subject to prior notification, and more importantly (iii) the adoption of verification measures, which were extended

⁴ See the text of "The Helsinki Final Act", 1975; available at: <http://www.osce.org/mc/39501?download=true>.

to include on-site inspection.⁵ In fact, the adoption of on-site inspection, which covered inspection of military airports, military establishments, and military bases, represented a major breakthrough in the development of CBMs. The objective was to enable each party to know what the other was doing and why, to know the size of troops, firepower, troops structure, weaponry systems, and training procedures, and thus to guarantee that seeing was indeed tantamount to believing.

This progression into more significant, verifiable, and binding CBMs was not a seamless development in which NATO and Warsaw Pact moved automatically from Helsinki to Stockholm. Rather, it was the result of the second era of détente. In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in Moscow with a new strategic vision for relations with the West. Gorbachev realized there were two important realities about the Soviet Union: (i) that the worsening of economic conditions in the Soviet Union during the Brezhnev years had undermined its capacity to project power and influence at the global level, and (ii) that the increasing technological gap between the Soviet Union and the United States in favour of the latter meant that the Soviet Union would be losing ground in the continuation of the arms race. In this context, the new Soviet leadership developed a new strategic outlook which evolved around the notion of the ‘balance of interests’ rather than the balance of power. In November 1985, an American–Soviet summit was held. The summit was the first between the two superpowers since 1979. Another summit was held in October 1986 in which the two sides discussed proposals for arms control agreements. It was in the context of the second détente that the CSCE countries were able to implement harsher CBMs which involved potential risks for national security and state sovereignty. It was only then that Gorbachev gave his signal for approval that the Soviet Union would accept the introduction of verification measures into the Stockholm Document.

Similarly, the third and fourth generations of CBMs were an outcome of a set of global transformations that took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The American–Soviet arms control negotiations which had started in 1986 resulted in the signing of the *Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces* (INF) Treaty in December 1987. The INF Treaty was the first arms control agreement in a decade. The Treaty stipulated the elimination of all ground-based intermediate and short-range nuclear ballistic missiles from the European theatre. It also established a verification regime based on cooperative monitoring. Four years after the conclusion of the INF Treaty, the superpowers concluded the *Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty* (START I) in July 1991, which was considered the first treaty to actually reduce the size of strategic nuclear arsenals.⁶ In addition, the year 1991 witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. The end of the Soviet

⁵ See text of “The Stockholm Document”, 1986; available at: <http://www.osce.org/fsc/41238>

⁶ Under START I, the two superpowers were obliged to cut the number of their strategic nuclear warheads to no more than 6,000 each, which could be deployed on no more than 1,600 strategic missiles and heavy bombers. The treaty also banned the production, testing and deployment of new or modified ICBMs and SLBMs with more than ten warheads, and provided for intrusive verification procedures.

empire brought the nuclear confrontation between the East and West to an end. It also freed East European countries from Soviet domination, and enabled them to pursue a pro-Western policy. It was in the context of these transformations in the global strategic environment that the CSCE members were able to develop more advanced generations of CBMs.

The history of CBMs between Egypt and Israel also represents another case in point. In 1957, following the Suez crisis, Egypt unilaterally introduced a number of security and confidence-building arrangements in Sinai in exchange for a full Israeli withdrawal from Sinai. First, Egypt permitted the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force in Sinai along the borders with Israel and at checkpoints on the Straits of Tiran. The UN force was mandated to carry out patrols, man sensitive border positions, and prevent infiltration across the borders. It also provided assurances against violations. Second, Egypt agreed to carry out demilitarization measures by limiting its troops in Sinai to two military divisions. These CBMs were modest in nature compared with other types of CBMs. Indeed, there was no potential for higher levels of CBMs due to the highly antagonistic pattern of Egyptian-Israeli relations at that time.

Twenty years later, however, the two countries were able to implement higher levels of CBMs. In 1977, relations between Egypt and Israel witnessed a major breakthrough due to the political initiative of the then Egyptian President Anwar El-Sadat, who entered into direct peace negotiations with Israel. The Sadat Initiative, as it came to be widely known, was unexpected and even shocking. For the first time, an Arab political leader was negotiating directly with Israel and visiting that country even though the territorial issues were not resolved. The Initiative changed the strategic environment of the Egyptian-Israeli conflict as it created a momentum toward the resolution of the territorial issues. In this context, Egypt and Israel entered into intensive negotiations under the auspices of the United States, which resulted in the conclusion of the Camp David agreement in 1978 and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979. The peace treaty provided for the resolution of Egyptian-Israeli territorial issues and the normalization of bilateral relations. It also introduced an extensive set of bilateral, verifiable CBMs such as hotlines, demilitarized zones, limitation of forces, early warning stations in designated areas, monitoring, surveillance, and on-site inspections.

2.2.4 Reliance on Poorly-Developed Assumptions

Last but not least, the arms control literature relies on poorly developed assumptions about the nature and operation of arms control. It fails to establish the empirical link between arms control and the structure of inter-state security relations. It rather treats the impact of arms control on security as assumed rather than proven. In the Traditional approach, for example, one of the underlying assumptions about arms control is that it will reduce misperceptions and clarify intentions between states, and thus improve their security relations. This is presumed to take place because the exchange

of information about military capabilities and activities between states will lead to greater transparency, which in turn will help reduce suspicions, build confidence, and bring some stabilization or improvement in the structure of security relations.

This assumption, however, is highly questionable on a number of grounds. First, the fact that arms control is treated within the Traditional approach as a mechanism oriented towards the status quo makes it unlikely that arms control will reduce the sources of security risks between states. This is because arms control does not deal with the core issues of contention, basically the main source of conflict. In this respect, arms control might be used to avoid dealing with the actual security problems or, in some cases, to replace the implementation of other measures that could be more effective in addressing the main sources of conflict. More importantly, there is no well-established evidence that a positive relationship exists between information and confidence. The acquisition of more information about the military forces of the adversary is not a guarantee for improving security relations. Indeed, having more information about the adversary through arms control agreements could in some instances feed suspicions rather than resolve them. This is particularly the case when arms control could not provide 'perfect' information in a fundamentally suspicious environment. According to Desjardins (1996: 62),

Data not confirming information acquired by other means or suggesting a more serious threat than previously believed would not increase confidence, but is more likely to create mistrust and suspicion. Information provided voluntarily, no matter what its quality or accuracy, may not be necessarily believed. In fact, it may very well only bring more questions, apprehensions, and misgivings about what is not known. Not all forms of transparency will necessarily be useful to build confidence. Half-truths about the real purpose of some weapons acquisition are likely to reinforce patterns of suspicions and mistrust, especially if such semi-transparency is under the cover of an agreement designed to reassure others of peaceful intent.

Although the Transformationalist approach tried to look deeper into the way arms control works between states, it also fell into the trap of presumed, rather than scientifically proven, connections. In the Transformationalist view, the argument that an arms control process will trigger a positive change in the security environment is based on a number of interrelated assumptions on how this process is intended to work. Perhaps the most important of these assumptions are (i) that two or more contending parties will have a mutual interest in launching an arms control process; (ii) that the parties will agree on the precise content of an arms control dialogue; (iii) that formal negotiations will result in an arms control agreement; (iv) that agreement will be translated into effective implementation; and (v) that successful implementation will lead to the transformation of political and security perceptions in a positive direction. This set of assumptions is supported by no scientific evidence. There is no assurance that the launching of an arms control process will ultimately lead to the implementation of meaningful arms control agreements, and accordingly the occurrence of positive shifts in attitudes. In fact, there are cases in which the arms control process has failed to move beyond the initial stages of exploration and discussions for a variety of reasons, such as the case of arms control negotiations between the Arabs and Israel in the context of

the ACRS working group. In other cases, the launching of an arms control process might in itself lead to negative results if things did not go well during the three main phases (exploration, negotiation, and implementation) of the process, especially towards the last phase where discussions have to lead to the conclusion and implementation of a negotiated arms control agreement. If the contending parties failed to implement the agreement for any reason, this could destroy any sort of confidence built earlier during the exploration and negotiation phases.

The main conclusion to be drawn from this review is that the literature on arms control cannot locate the exact role of arms control within the framework of the processes of conflict prevention or conflict resolution. In fact, the literature is in dire need of the development of a theory which clearly identifies the dependent variable, and places arms control within the overall context of the conflict resolution process. The Traditional/Transformationalist dichotomy reflects the confusion in the field over what arms control actually implies and involves. Does arms control refer to specific measures designed to (i) stabilize security relations and regulate military forces, or (ii) change the content of the strategic environment towards more cooperative security structures? Arms control theorists are not sure about which dependent variable is linked to arms control. Is it crisis stability, conflict resolution, or conflict prevention? The exact role of arms control will differ depending on that variable. Arms control may play a role in crisis stability and conflict prevention, but not in conflict resolution. This confusion has even become worse with the rise of the Contextualists, who have shifted the focus of analysis from an examination of the impact of arms control on the security environment to an examination of the conditions that create an interest in arms control. Within the Contextualist approach, there is no agreement among scholars about the preconditions (the intervening variables) that pave the way for the application of arms control. Is it political détente, balance of power, shared democratic culture, or all of these? Further, there is no agreement on the exact link between these preconditions and the actual implementation of arms control. Do these preconditions create the political will to apply arms control, or do they mainly serve as supporting conditions to a process whose initiation and implementation are linked to other variables?

This state of theoretical confusion is largely reflected in the way arms control has been approached in the Middle East. Since the rise of the arms control agenda in the Middle East in the early 1990s, concerned global and regional actors have developed divergent views about the utility of arms control in the context of the Arab–Israeli conflict. Although these views have been largely motivated by political considerations, their advocates have made frequent references to different theoretical approaches in an attempt to support their argument. Whereas global actors have viewed arms control in the Middle East from a Transformationalist perspective, thereby advocating the application of arms control as an essential component of a fundamentally more cooperative approach to conflict resolution and regional security, the Arabs have been quite cautious about arms control, and viewed it from either (i) a Traditional perspective as an instrument for managing political relations and military balances, and thus not as a substitute for conflict resolution, or (ii) a Contextualist perspective as a code of conduct whose application must be

preceded by the occurrence of certain transformations in the strategic environment between the contending parties. This calls for a review of global approaches to arms control in the Middle East, the context in which they were articulated, and the reactions they triggered from major regional, particularly Arab, actors.

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