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**CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES:
A PRACTICAL APPROACH**

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1. Introduction

In the first chapter of the Barcelona Declaration adopted, at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference 27-28 November 1995, the participants expressed their conviction that peace, stability, and security of the Mediterranean region are a common asset, which they pledge to promote and strengthen by all means at their disposal. The Senior Officials Committee of the Barcelona Declaration in their ad hoc meeting in Palermo, June 1998, confirmed the importance to work out a “Charter” for Mediterranean Peace and Stability. The function of the Charter is to provide the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) with a coherent strategy for the political and security partnership as well as the instruments to achieve such strategy. The Charter is intended to be a foundation for future regional security architecture, and an institutional mechanism with instruments of its own and with a mostly conflict prevention character. The suggested research agenda for the Charter covers a reflection on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), Political Dialogue, and Conflict Prevention policies and institutions.

However, the progress of the EMP within the domain of political and security issues was rather slow. Also the third chapter of the Declaration, related generally to soft security issues, has not seen any significant progress. With regard to the first chapter, only a few CBMs have been approved. The talks on the Charter, since it was first time proposed, have seen a lot of changes characterized by a considerable degree of “variable geometry” in relation to confidence building measures, and downgrading of military and military-related security cooperation.¹

Six CBMs were, nonetheless approved in the Foreign Ministerial Meeting in Malta Conference (April 1997): setting up a network of contact points for political and security matters; exchange of information on adherence to international human rights instruments; exchange of information on adherence to international legal instruments in the field of disarmament and arms control; exchange of information on adherence to international instruments in the field of prevention of and fight against terrorism; convening of diplomat seminars; and establishment of EuroMeSCo network of foreign policy institutes. The inventory confirms that today’s EMP could hardly afford CBMs going beyond information and transparency, i.e. CBMs of prevailing declaratory nature.²

In the third Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Stuttgart, April 15-16, 1999; the ministers agreed that stability in the Mediterranean region requires a comprehensive and balanced approach, and a key factor to this end will be the elaboration of the “Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Stability” to which ministers committed themselves. The ministers see the Charter as an instrument that will provide an enhanced political dialogue, as well as an evolutionary and progressive development

of partnership-building measures, good-neighborly relations, regional cooperation, and preventive diplomacy.³

To deal with the difficulties facing the talks on the Charter, Stephen Calleya thought that the time does not seem politically ripe to establish such security frame work, and it may be more “realistic” to propose a series of confidence building measures that will assist in developing a more cooperative Euro-Mediterranean area in a shorter time. Applying gradualism-in his view- can help the process work, and the CBMs become operational.⁴

Some Arab scholars concentrate on the idea that CBMs should only come after solving disputed problems not before. According to Selim⁵ “the experience of CBMs in Europe has indicated that such measures could only do its function under two conditions: reaching a state of strategic balance between the parties concerned and reaching final agreements on borders between states”. In his view, the fundamental paradox in the Arab-Israeli relations lies on the fact that there are no agreements regarding occupied territories and borders have been finally reached. Ignoring these conditions is not practical, and for him it is difficult to believe that any sort of such measures can take place while one of the partners is occupying the lands of others or monopolizing the possession of mass destruction weapons. Starting with CBMs means that the aggressor is given an advantage to absorb the land and to change its nature, hence complicating the process in the future.

In spite of this logic which basically ignores “gradualism”, priorities of action, possible “reversibility” in applying CBMs, and the power of moral spin-offs in the international scene when adhering to some limited measures; it happened as we shall see later, that some initiatives on the ground were taken by both sides to promote confidence and mutual trust. In fact the Middle East peace process has its own characteristics which may impose different techniques of using CBMs. CBMs should be reciprocal and functional and more tailored to the phases of the process. In the Middle East context, practical CBMs may be also required from time to time to “fuel” the peace process, and to help transition and transfer from lower to higher orbit.

In the last two decades the Egyptian regional security policy has transformed from confrontation to cooperation. Confidence Building Measures are considered as an important instrument for developing the Middle East peace process and boosting it forward in spite of difficulties and setbacks. After the Gulf War (1990-1991), Egypt became part of the new-built North-South relations, and appeared among the principle actors in the European and NATO Mediterranean Dialogue Initiatives. Within the frame of the Middle East, and the larger frame of the Mediterranean region, the Egyptian experience in applying CBMs covers a wide spectrum of security issues ranging from soft security, to soft security with hard edge, to more wide military cooperation between Egypt and Euro-Mediterranean countries.

The purpose of this contribution is to demonstrate that, in spite of the difficulties in defining a general description of CBMs in the forthcoming Mediterranean Charter, a number of concrete measures are already in place. The top-down political process of the Charter has to take into account and benefit from the bottom-up process of the existing measures. The paper is an attempt to position the project of the Euro-Mediterranean Charter in its real environment shaped by the heritage of diverse experiences of building

confidence in the Mediterranean region, and also by the parallel “anti-process” of rising doubts, sensitivities, and arms buildup.

The road map of work starts by showing the position of confidence building measures in the Barcelona process followed by two main consecutive sections: The first section deals briefly with North-South relations, the associated dialogue initiatives, and the role of Egypt in these initiatives. The second section focuses with more details on the Egyptian experience in utilizing CBMs in its Middle East and Euro-Mediterranean relations, and demonstrates how Egypt “think Mediterranean” in its regional security policy. Reviewing changing threat perceptions in the Mediterranean region is considered as an important prerequisite and determinant for dealing with CBMs. It is understood that the work will complement the efforts of colleagues concentrating on other dimensions of the subject.

2. Confidence Building Measures in the Barcelona Process

Military related disputes and tensions are common among the countries of the Mediterranean region. However, the socio-economic and cultural tensions and conflicts in the Mediterranean basin are believed to be dominating. It is also believed that little use can be made of CBMs and CSBMs as they are known from the CSCE experience. A more fruitful option then, is to look for “Partnership-Building Measures” (political measures primarily in the economic but also in the ecological field), and “Exchange-Furthering Measures” (directed to overcome existing mutual enemy images). Such a socio-economic and cultural perspective of CBMs is part of the EMP interstate relations, i.e. essentially relations between Northern and Southern partners. South-South relations and, in particular, inter-state relations in the Middle East are greatly affected by military tensions and conflicts, where CBMs and CSBMs are essential and sometimes regarded as the “poor sisters” of arms control policies.⁶

In principle, to establish peace and stability in the Mediterranean region both types of CBMs are needed. CBMs intended to ease socio-economic and cultural tensions, and also military related CBMs or Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs) to prevent conflicts from erupting like that between the Arab countries and Israel, and other regional disputes. CSBMs are also needed to be used with arms control as a form of activity for some states not able to agree on arms control. CSBMs are also used to counter and limit Weapons of Mass Destruction WMD proliferation by setting up or reinforcing cooperative security projects (as for instance, the Non-Proliferation Treaty NPT, or Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone WMDFZ). As related to EMP, only CBMs geared to increase information and transparency are now applicable, with the possibility of establishing military related CBMs or CSBMs of declaratory nature.

The measures for building the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership elaborated within the framework of the Barcelona process took into account the cultural and human factors bearing in security, and the need to overcome negative preconceptions, e.g. through the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean TV channel, the setting up of a panel of historians to examine the Euro-Mediterranean heritage, and the support for dialogue between

religions. Culture and identity has been regarded as important and independent factors, as are economic, social and political development.

3. Security in the Mediterranean after the Cold War

The field of action of confidence building measures is defined by threat perceptions dominating the security environment in a given region. During the Cold War the Mediterranean was dominated by East-West conflicts. Most of the countries of North Africa and of the Middle East belonged to the “non-aligned” movement. They enjoyed a certain margin of freedom between the USSR and NATO, and tried to obtain advantages from both. The security environment in the area was in general confrontational, and largely dominated by bilateral agreements with the US or the Soviet Union. Nuclear stalemate meant at that time that both superpowers had to intervene almost automatically in every crisis and conflict. The strategic logic in the bipolar world was a “zero sum” one. The Arab-Israeli conflict, and the high state of tension between Greece and Turkey, represented at that time the greatest potential threats to the stability of the Mediterranean.

After the Cold War, and more specifically after the Gulf War (1990-1991), the Mediterranean was transformed to a geopolitical region with various identities, prospects, and borders. Soft security issues, such as the waves of emigration from the South, clashes of culture and identity, terrorism, organized crime, underdevelopment and internal instability constituted the Western perceptions of the risks coming from the South. Europe feels above all threatened by demographic pressure from the South, while the United States feels threatened by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and by terrorism. Because of increasing demand on water, it has become a critical geopolitical factor, particularly in the Middle East. Military deterrence or intervention no longer works with such type of risks. The strategic game in the Mediterranean, as elsewhere, is no longer played on a “zero sum” basis. The complimentary role of Europe and the US became an important element of the security equation in the Mediterranean.

3.1. The North’s threat perceptions

The only military threat that could develop in the south involves weapons of mass destruction: nuclear, biological, and chemical. Even if these are tactical rather than strategic weapons, they could unleash panic among the peoples of the West if the threat of use was declared, or if they were actually employed. The West faces, in the second place, the risk of a terrorist attack on a large scale backed by an outlaw state or by a fundamentalist group. Terrorist activities could also spread among the mass of immigrants in Europe. The ability to mobilize the immigrants was clearly in evidence when the “Ocalan case” occurred.⁷ Maritime incidents could also occur if the freedom of navigation is curtailed. No threat from the South exists using conventional weapons except from long range ballistic missiles. Only Israel has the capability to develop ballistic missiles, other countries like Iran, Egypt, Syria, Lybia have now limited capabilities compared to Israel.⁸

3.2 The South-North, and the South-South threat perceptions

The West, instead, enjoys an enormous military superiority which is employed passively in the defense of the status quo, and not actively, in conquest. Nevertheless, the West's military superiority leads to worries in the countries of the southern rim, as evidenced during the creation of the WEU's two forces, Eurofor and Euromarfor. Greater anxieties resulted from NATO's "New Strategic Concept" approved at the 50th anniversary summit in Washington on April 23-24, 1999. NATO's air campaign against Yugoslavia has also produced a worried reaction by which many countries in the South fear that similar actions could take place in the Mediterranean (as it happened in Lybia, Sudan, and still happening in Iraq), in case Western interests were threatened, or in retaliation for acts of terrorism. It should be noted that the NATO bombings in the Balkan are strongly supported by the left in Israel, and criticized instead by the right. The same division in public opinion and among intellectuals is also observed in Egypt and in other countries of the Arab world.

As for territorial claims in South-South relations, in addition to those stemming from the Arab-Israeli conflict, there are the following cases: the case between Morocco and Algeria over the Western Sahara; between Libya and Chad for the Aouan strip; between Egypt and Sudan for the Halayeb triangle; between Syria and Turkey over the province of "Iskenderun", and others. These disputes have cooled down because, among other factors, each country is concentrating on the problems of internal stability and development. Criticism of the West is always popular at most of the countries of the South. It is accused of duplicity and "double standard", particularly for matters related to Israel.

3.3 CBMs in The NATO Mediterranean initiative

The NATO Mediterranean initiative is mostly political. It reflects the NATO view that security in Europe is indivisible, and that the NATO can play a constructive role in enhancing security and stability more widely in Europe and in neighboring regions through programs of outreach, cooperation and partnership. It was with this approach in mind that the NATO invited six non-NATO Mediterranean countries –Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia- to start a Mediterranean dialogue with NATO. Through dialogue and regular exchanges of information it is hoped that Mediterranean partners can dispel any misunderstandings and misconceptions that may have arisen over the activities of NATO. NATO also can get a better understanding of some of the security concerns and perspectives of the dialogue countries. The NATO approach was practical, and the dialogue with Mediterranean partners was performed through various measures:

- For the first time NATO received in its headquarters parliamentarians from the six Mediterranean dialogue countries. During the visit, there was an open exchange of views on security matters, that was in itself an important contribution in confidence building.
- In the field of science, the dialogue countries participated in meetings under the auspices of the NATO Science Committee. At the NATO School in Oberammergau, several courses have been opened to dialogue partners on peacekeeping, civil emergency planning, arms control and verification, responsibility of military forces in environmental protection, and European security cooperation.
- Observation of NATO sea and land exercises by members from dialogue countries.

- Building confidence with dialogue countries through cooperative activities in implementation of agreements and peacekeeping operations. In this regard, three dialogue partners –Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco- already cooperated militarily with NATO through their participation in IFOR, and SFOR in Bosnia.

At the NATO Madrid Summit (July, 1997), the Mediterranean initiative was given a new dynamism with the creation of the Mediterranean cooperation group. It will involve allied members states directly in the political discussions. Future characteristics of the dialogue could includes:

- Participation of all NATO allies in the dialogue.
- More enhanced role of the Mediterranean countries in shaping the dialogue.
- Enhancing the dialogue in security matters, using the potential of the newly created cooperation group.
- Developing additional confidence building measures in the military domain, civil emergency planning, particularly regarding civil-military cooperation in response to natural or man-made disasters.⁹

3.4 West European Union-Mediterranean Dialogue

Since its beginning in 1992, WEU's Mediterranean dialogue has constituted a unique multilateral Euro-Mediterranean exchange in security and military matters. These activities represent an important experience in information sharing and confidence building. WEU's Mediterranean group coordinates the dialogue activities and insures that they are coherent with the Mediterranean activities of EU and NATO. The dialogue is based on seven principles: regularity and stability, transparency, confidence-building, conflict prevention, sufficiency of the conventional armed forces, peaceful settlement of conflicts, and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The following concrete measures have been conducted:¹⁰

- On a bilateral basis, Mediterranean partners are informed about developments in WEU, and they also have the opportunity to express their points of view and perceptions on Mediterranean security and defense matters. The information exchange is normally performed between the Secretariat-General and each Mediterranean partner's Ambassador in Brussels.
- WEU also organizes multi-bilateral meetings (Council, Secretariat General, plus one Mediterranean partner), or multilateral meetings. Three multi-bilateral meetings of experts have taken place so far, and one multilateral meeting.
- Observation of WEU's CRISEX exercises by Mediterranean partners.
- Organization of activities in which academics and officials from Mediterranean partners participate. The Institute for Security Studies organized in June 1996 seminars on confidence-building measures in the Mediterranean, and on approaches to peacekeeping among the Euro-Mediterranean countries in June 1997.
- Organizing the first visit to WEU's Satellite Center by representatives of Mediterranean dialogue partners in Dec. 1997.

- Representatives of the Brussels Embassies of the seven Mediterranean dialog countries were invited to a briefing by the WEU Military Staff and the Planning Cell at the WEU Secretariat General in April 1998.
- As a “soft” confidence-Building measure, an information seminar was held in Paris on 28-29 September 1998, between 13 military officers from the Mediterranean dialogue partners’ armed forces and 11 officers from countries of the WEU community. The aim of the seminar, which was attended also by representatives and officials from international organizations, was to give a general overview on WEU in the changing European security structure.
- To explore the possibilities of supplementing the first chapter of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership with the experience and capabilities of WEU, the Istituto Affari Internazionali and the WEU Institute organized a seminar in Genoa Italy on 4-5 December 1998, on “WEU’s role in the Mediterranean and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership”.

WEU’s Mediterranean dialogue could be further developed, through introducing more Mediterranean partners, and by envisaging new CBMs. These developments will undoubtedly encounter several difficulties on their way, notably the search for topics for cooperation acceptable to all the participating countries, as well as the need of a greater coordination with NATO’s Mediterranean initiative.¹¹

3.5 Confidence Building through Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping operations are likely to be a major and fruitful area for mutual Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. European countries have played a leading role in promoting peacekeeping activities in various conflicts, and South Mediterranean countries are actively expanding their peacekeeping roles. CBMs might accompany introducing a peacekeeping regime. In a region where states are unable or unwilling to negotiate CBMs, cooperation in peacekeeping might itself be considered an important measure for confidence building. Joint peacekeeping activities can provide participating countries with opportunities to ease suspicions among their neighbors.

Individual EU states are the largest contributor to the UN’s peacekeeping operations budget, providing one-third of the total contribution and nearly one-third of the total personnel assigned to UN peacekeeping operations.¹² Mediterranean countries can work together closely within the UN Stand-by Arrangements and by becoming parties to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. Training peacekeeping personnel and providing necessary equipment will be essential for the success of such activities. It is noteworthy that Northern European countries have already hosted peacekeeping training courses for military personnel and civilian staff from South Mediterranean countries. The NATO-led Peace Implementation Force (IFOR) experience can be expanded and developed creating more areas for cooperation to regional level.

The contribution of Egyptian, Jordanian and Moroccan troops in IFOR and SFOR is a clear evidence of the possibilities of North-South cooperation for peace keeping missions. In Bosnia, the Italian forces have appreciated the valuable operational capabilities of the Egyptian battalion engaged in the zone under Italian responsibility. Professor Beniamino Andreatta ex Italian Minister of Defense commented on that in his speech to the

international conference held in Rome, Nov. 10-11, 1997; on “The future of NATO’s Mediterranean Initiative”; he said: “This was one of the clearest examples of how an effective partnership for peace can represent a common value and may be extended case by case, to the countries of the southern shore of the Mediterranean.”¹³

According to Field Marshal Hussien Tantawy, Egyptian Minister of Defense, “the Egyptian participation in peace-keeping in Bosnia stems from its belief in the importance of stability in this part of the world, and also the importance of cooperation between the states of the Mediterranean. It is also part of the Egyptian commitment to upholding international legality. To affirm the Egyptian commitment to world peace and security, Egypt is always prepared to respond to any invitation from the United Nations to participate in any peace-keeping force in any region, provided the United Nations guarantees the security of these forces”.¹⁴

3.6 Cooperative Mediterranean Role for Eurofor and Euromarfor

In pursuit of substantial European security and defense identity, Italy, France, Spain and Portugal have inaugurated in 1996 the 20000-reaction force Eurofor, a combined rapid deployment force for humanitarian missions or peacekeeping duties in the Mediterranean area. The force is similar in concept to the Euromarfor naval force announced in 1995 by the same four countries for operations in the Mediterranean Sea.¹⁵ The tasks of the Euromarfor were defined in the WEU Council meeting at Petersberg near Bonn in June 1992 and involved humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, conflict prevention and peace support.¹⁶

To dispel the negative perceptions that have been generated since the establishment of this maritime security force, the maritime security arrangement of Euromarfor should be opened to the southern Mediterranean countries (at least as observer status in the short term). At a later stage, this force can then become the actual confidence building enforcer of EMMA (Euro-Mediterranean Maritime Agency). In the short term the primary mandate of such an arrangement can be limited to fact finding and consultation missions, inspection and monitoring delegations. At a later stage situation centers may be set up around the Mediterranean to monitor activities under this mandate. The long list of security issues that would require consistent attention includes maritime safety, environmental pollution, drug trafficking, terrorism, organized crime, and illegal migration.

4. Egyptian National Security after the cold war

During the 1950s and 1960s, the threats to Egyptian national security have been defined in terms of Western domination. The Egyptian struggle against British colonialism and US hegemony were for long the main features of Egyptian security policy. Even more important, the creation, with the Western support, of the state of Israel in 1948 constituted a major security threat to Egypt. Egypt fought Israel in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973. Even after the 1979 peace treaty between the two countries, Egyptian fears from Israel remained. The fact that Israel has no defined borders, and the Israeli superiority in

conventional and nuclear weapons combined with the various military constraints on the Sinai Peninsula, have rendered Egyptian security hostage to any Israeli change of mind.

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed the rise of a new national security dimension for Egypt. The growing interdependence of Egypt and the Gulf region has made the stability of the Gulf a national security interest for Egypt. The Gulf Arab oil states contributed to Egyptian security when they used the oil embargo in support of Egypt during the 1973 war. Ever since the end of that war they supported Egypt with various types of economical assistance and investments. As a result of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 the scope of Egyptian security interests in the Gulf became much larger. Egypt did not hesitate to support Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the other Gulf states by both political and military means. For the liberation of Kuwait and the protection of the Gulf states, Egypt allied itself with the USA, the UK, France and others Western powers. The threat perceptions outlined above lead to two conclusions in connection with the position and role of the Mediterranean in the security of Egypt:

- Via the Suez Canal, for Egypt the Mediterranean is intrinsically linked to the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf as a single strategic area.
- While the presence of Western naval forces in these sea areas was considered before the Gulf War (1990) a threat to Egypt, owing to Western, particularly US, support for Israel, their presence after that War is nevertheless considered an advantage for the purposes of protecting the Gulf region.¹⁷

4.1 Israel armament policy and security of the Mediterranean Region

Israel's nuclear arsenal and its expanding space-based surveillance system have had a profound impact not only on the strategic balance between Israel and Egypt, but also between Israel and countries in the Mediterranean region. Israel has a sophisticated nuclear military capability that may include: Uranium enriching facilities to weapons grade levels, design and production capabilities of nuclear bombs and nuclear missile born warheads. An estimated 100-200 nuclear weapons that can be delivered by ballistic missiles or aircrafts represent a very dangerous element of the Israeli power projection capabilities in the Middle East. It is also believed that an Israeli active chemical weapons program is underway. It has mustard and nerve agents production capabilities. In the biological warfare domain, Israel has extensive research activities reportedly conducted at the Biological Research Institute in Ness Ziona.

Israel missile capabilities are ranging from theater ballistic missiles (BM) to orbital delivery systems. The missile arsenal includes: Jericho-1 BM system (500km/500kg), Jericho-2 BM system (1500km/1000kg), MGM-52 Lance missiles (130km/450kg), Shavit Space Launch Vehicle (4500km/250kg). Some reports refer to Jericho-3 program under development using Shavit technologies with range up to (4800 km/1000kg). Most of the previous systems are prepared to be "nuclear capable". Israel also has different types of short and medium range UAV, long range anti-ship cruise missiles (120km, 200km), long range air-to-air and air-to-ground missile systems (including Popeye-1, and Popeye-3 land-attack air launched missiles with 350 km range). The Israeli Aircraft Force includes the most powerful top of the line aircrafts including F-15 and F-16 systems. Israel has received recently the long reach capability F-15I aircraft.¹⁸

Israel is continuously receiving direct support from the United States financially and technologically for developing and fielding the anti-missile-missile Arrow system. The technological areas, components, methodologies, are easily used on the further development of the offensive Israeli arsenal. Israel is even now planning to extend its missile intercept concepts to boost-phase intercept, triggering a new phase of missile and anti-missile race in the Middle East. The concept in its essence is provocative, intrusive, destabilizing, and offensive. The US-Israeli joint venture satellite company has begun building a satellite constellation of eight small satellites based on the Israeli Ofeq spy satellite design. The ground resolution of each satellite will be around 1.5 meters which means the ability of identifying military valued objects.¹⁹

The threat perceived by the Arab and non-Arab countries due to the Israeli conventional and non-conventional build up was behind the initiation of counter armament programs. The scope of such programs is limited in size and capabilities compared to the Israeli already deployed systems. Most of the missile programs are based on the limited capability Scud-B/C systems. The Iranian programs are still in its experimental phase especially those heading to long range or heavy payloads. The Arab and Islamic countries are actually subjected to severe measures by the international regimes prohibiting missile and advanced technologies proliferation on a selective bases. With the exception of Mauritania, Oman, and United Arab Emirates all Arab states are parties to the NPT. Mauritania, Oman, and UAE have no nuclear facilities that require International safeguards. The Iranian record in adhering to the international regimes controlling the proliferation of MDW is good compared to Israel. See Table (1).

Table (1) Adherence of Middle East' countries to MDW nonproliferation agreements

Country	NPT	CTBT	CWC	BTWC
ISRAEL	Not signed	Signed 25/9/96	Signed 13/1/93	not signed
IRAN	ratified 20/2/1970	Signed 24/9/96	Ratified 3/11/97	Ratified 22/8/73
EGYPT	Ratified 26/2/1981	Signed 14/10/96	Not signed	Signed 10/4/72
SYRIA	Ratified 24/9/89	Not signed	Not signed	Signed 14/4/72
ALGERIA	Acceded 12/1/1995	Signed 15/10/96	Ratified 14/8/95	Not signed
LIBIA	Ratified 26/5/75	Not signed	Not signed	Ratified 19/1/69
IRAQ	Ratified 29/10/69	Not signed	Not signed	Ratified 18/4/91

The revision underway of the Israeli security policy seems to be formed around a much more aggressive strategy than the current one, based on the projection of power over long distances, and military units at full operational readiness able to go into action immediately without calling up reservists. The revision process should also lead to a

doctrine on the use of nuclear weapons that will be based far less on the concept of “weapons of last resort” and of deterrence. More dangerously the readiness to “launch on warning” which could be destabilizing and lead to new spiral of arms race in the Middle East.²⁰

4.2 Confidence Building in the Egyptian-Israeli bilateral relations

Two historical events were behind the transformation of the security environment in the Middle East and in the Mediterranean region. The visit of President Anwar El Sadat to Israel in 19 November 1977, and the Gulf War that led to the liberation of Kuwait by the coalition forces in 1991. Although Sadat was able to make his courageous initiative towards peace with Israel through direct negotiations without going to Jerusalem, he preferred to go there and to speak directly to the Israeli Knesset. The principle reason behind his decision was to create a new environment in the Middle East, and to challenge the Israeli claim of a country surrounded by outnumbered enemies by an “extra dose” of confidence building. He even refused the suggestion of Mr. Ismael Fahmy the ministry of foreign affairs to limit his visit to Tel Aviv.²¹ Mr. Fahmy afterwards resigned in protest to Sadat’s visit to Israel.

Moshe Dyan, minister of foreign affairs of Israel at the time of peace negotiations with Egypt has questioned himself in his book “Breakthrough: A personal account of the Egyptian Israeli Peace Negotiations”: “What is the real reason that pushed Sadat to take his daring step to go to Jerusalem ?..a question that I thought long to ask Sadat about, and I did not get the chance during his visit to Israel, because his time would not permit that. Afterwards, I did not stop to think about this subject during the various occasions that I had the opportunity to meet him in Camp David, in Egypt and in Israel..even when we were alone. Such occasion was materialized after one year and half in Ismailia, 4 of June 1979. Sadat’s answer was: the principle cause behind my decision to visit Israel was that the Israeli have security problems, and they used to hide behind them and ask for face-to-face negotiations. Well, I will go myself ..meet them directly and alone..me and Israel.”²²

From that time on, Egypt and Israel have engaged in long process of negotiations and political dialogue that led to the implementation of a series of confidence building measures tailored to fit with the difficulties and circumstances facing their common relations during the last 20 years. These initiatives for confidence building not only came from governments of both countries, but also from individuals and organizations. The failure of the institutionalized forums like multilateral negotiations and MENA conferences was not without benefits. They offered first time dialogue between military and civilian specialists on wide range of topics including sensitive security ones.

Contrary to the notion of “ cold peace “ between Egypt and Israel, Egyptian – Israeli relations are warm by the Middle East standards of bilateral interactions. Between 1991 and 1996, Egyptian–Israeli trade was between 8% and 10% of total Egyptian trade. Israel, even after excluding oil, was the second trading with Egypt in the region only after Saudi Arabia. In 1995, 30 thousand Egyptians visited Israel; the largest number of visitors to a Middle Eastern country for reasons other than work or pilgrimage. During the same period, the average official visits were 15, more than Egyptian official visits for most of the countries of the region. By 1996, Egyptian– Israeli mixed marriages reached 1039,

more than Egyptian mixed marriages with many of the countries in the Middle East. In 1996, 326 thousand Israelis visited Egypt and spent 1.5 million tourist nights divided between Sinai and the Nile valley. Cooperation in the areas of agriculture, gas, oil, and textiles have been mounting more than the general mood of relations in the region.

The following are selected examples of activities that have produced wide range Confidence Building in the Egyptian-Israeli relations.

4.2.1 Confidence Building through MFO

The present security arrangements in Sinai involved significant Egyptian concessions. However, the Egyptian policy has been looking beyond the military limitations to the possibility of developing Sinai to such a degree it would be not only a great strategic asset to Egypt, but also a symbol of peace. Sinai, this historic invasion route is becoming more developed, more heavily populated, and better served by the government. By August 1981, the United States, Egypt, and Israel had negotiated a protocol to the treaty, creating the Multinational Force and Observers MFO. In creating the MFO, the parties (Egypt and Israel) and the US invented a new peacekeeping mechanism in which the parties themselves (Egypt and Israel) sit on the “board of directors”. It is a mechanism in which both parties have an intimate, day-to-day interest. As a result, over time it has become a mechanism in which the parties can place considerable trust.

The funding for the MFO comes equally from the United States, Egypt, and Israel, with few symbolic dollars from the Germans, the Japanese, and the Swiss. As a result of that Egypt and Israel take care together about management issues that involve continuous and ongoing discussions, and increases trust. Representatives of both countries are involved with MFO day-to-day, not just on the operational mission, but on the management mission. According to Wat Cluverius, the director general of the Multinational Force and Observer in Sinai, there has never been a serious violation of the treaty since the inception of the force.

One of the most important elements of the MFO’s operating environment is the existence, mandated in the treaty, of a liaison system on both sides. The treaty mandated Israel and Egypt to deal with each other on a daily basis, at the borders, on mutual problems. According to Wat Cluverius, there is a great deal of understanding and friendship between the officers on both the Egyptian and Israeli side. He further added that although the Egyptian side has the right to deploy 22 thousand troops in area A according to the treaty, the MFO never counted more than 8000. He also recommends that “It would be much better if they had mandated a liaison system on the Golan Heights with the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), so the Israeli and Syrians would have to talk to each other. Talking helps. It makes a big difference”.²³

4.2 .2 Sinai development project as a Confidence Building Measure

Nothing indicates Egypt’s peaceful intentions as Sinai rapid population growth, size of investments, and projects for its integration into the heartland of the country. The Egyptian project in Sinai is multi-faceted. In short all the elements of life are pumped into the Sinai Peninsula including people, water, electricity, and transportation.

- Through four tunnels under the Suez Canal the water of the Nile is now flowing in “EL Salam Canal” (Canal of peace), 86 kilometers long from the west bank of the Suez Canal to “El Arish” valley. “El Salam Canal” will be used for reclamation of 260 000 ha., from which 90 000 ha. in the West of the Suez Canal, and 170 000 ha. in the east side. The amount of water flowing is 14 million meter cubes daily, and the total cost of the project is 5.7 billions Egyptian Pounds.
- The project of electrical energy networking with Jordan was inaugurated by President Mubarak and King Abdalla in March 1999. The concept studies started in the middle of the 1980s, and it became a project in 1989. The project cost goes to 229 million dollars. Other countries, including Israel, are expected to join the project upon the conclusion of the Middle East peace process. The final target is to link with the European electricity network. The project constitutes an important element in the regional infrastructure for energy, and transportation.
- For the first time since 1967, trains will run from East to West over the Suez Canal in June 2000, using “Ferdan” bridge now under construction. The new railroad line represents the start point for re-operating the “Orient Express” train. The “Ferdan bridge” and the railroad between Ismailia and Rafah costs 1575 million EP. Furthermore, Egypt has established the “ International coastal Road “ that will link Rafah on the Egyptian–Israeli borders in the East, to El Saloum on the Egyptian Libyan borders.²⁴

4.2.3 Transparency in military information

Several initiatives are launched by both Egypt and Israel for promoting transparency in military affairs. Efforts in this domain are still limited and secrecy is basically the rule. Under this topic three activities can be recorded:

(1) Egyptian Military information center

In October 1998, the Egyptian Army inaugurated a new center of military information. The mission of the center, as declared by the Ministry of Defense is “to reflect understanding of the deep changes taking place in the international environment, and the increasing tendencies towards moderation and transparency in military affairs”.²⁵ The center diffuses through the Internet news and information about the Egyptian Armed forces.

(2) International Festival for Documentary Military Films

The Festival is directed under the auspices of the society “Arms and People” and works under the emblem “Arms in service of peace”. In September 1996 the Egyptian film “Military Information: towards new horizons” produced by the Information Military Center was chosen as the best film in the Bucharest Festival. Egypt also participated by two other films: “Egyptian song” and “Bright Star”. The later reviews the multilateral joint exercises “Bright Star” conducted in Egypt every two years by countries from Europe, Middle East, Africa, and the United States.²⁶ In December 1997, Egypt again participated in “Rome Festival” by the film “Places and events” with other 27 countries from Africa, Asia, Europe, and America. The film shows how military fortifications in the east side of the Suez Canal were changed to be touristic sites.²⁷

(3) SIPRI project on “Arms Procurement Decision Making”

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute SIPRI initiated a project on “Arms Procurement Decision Making” in China, India, Japan, Israel, South Korea, and Thailand. The aim of the project -started in 1993- is to examine why and how nations procure weapons and how national arms procurement decision-making processes can be harmonized with the requirements of public accountability. The project examines the ways in which the national arms procurement processes, even though they involve sensitive security issues and complex weapon systems, can become more responsive to the broader objectives of security and public accountability. This will contribute to the arms procurement restraint and, indirectly, to the broader aims of promoting transparency, stable and durable peace. A team of academicians, researchers, military industry experts, and generals from the Israeli Ministry of Defense, has participated in the project. Dr. Gerald Steinberg from Bar-Ilan University edited the section on Israel.²⁸ The work was published in September 1998. A summary of the work was published in Arabic by Al-Ahram news paper in Cairo, Aug. 20, 1999.

4.2.4 Cooperative Environmental Monitoring in Coastal Regions, Multilateral Joint exercises.

Cooperative environmental monitoring projects generally present an area of common interest for neighboring countries and an essential aspect of Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs). This type of CSBMs already started its first steps in the East Mediterranean. Under the supervision of the Israeli minister for environment and the Jordanian governor in Aqaba; Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Palestinian Authority conducted joint sea exercises in the Gulf of Aqaba, July 20, 1999.²⁹ The aim of the exercises was to share experience in environmental monitoring and oil spill pollution treatment. Such cooperative projects usually strengthen relations and agreements among participants. The shared ecosystem between the four countries present unique opportunity for cooperative work, share of data and technology, and harmonization of existing measures through transparency in the sampling methodologies and reporting procedures.

The sea exercises complement with the Israeli-Jordanian project “The Red Sea Marine Peace Park”. This park created by two formerly hostile countries, also provides many lessons of using environmental projects for confidence building. Jordan and Israel share 27 km and 14 km respectively of the coastline at the head of the gulf. The largest urban centers in the region are located within these two countries: Aqaba in Jordan with 55000 residents, and Eilat in Israel with 36000 residents. A multi-use Marine Park has been established on the South Coast of the Jordanian portion of the Gulf of Aqaba. This park, The Red Sea Marine Park, emerged out of the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan. The aim of the Park is to carefully balance the needs of conservation with the requirement of development. Efforts to create this bi-national Marine Peace Park benefited enormously from initial feasibility studies carried out by US agencies, such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the US Agency for International Development.³⁰

4.2.5 Confidence Building through “Track Two Mechanisms”: The SIPRI Middle East Expert Group.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) inaugurated a Middle East Security and Arms Control Project in October 1995. As the first major initiative of the project a Middle East Expert Group was formed to consider how a regional and comprehensive security regime might be developed in the Middle East. The Expert Group held four meetings between February 1997 and October 1998: in Alexandria, Egypt (February 1997), Sigtuna, Sweden (May 1997); Amman, Jordan (November 1997); and Rabat, Morocco (October 1998). The group members came from Europe, Japan, The Middle East, North America, and Russia. The final report of the Expert Group pointed out that Confidence-and Security Building Measures are necessary to build security regime in the Middle East. Among those recommended are: openness and transparency measures to reduce the likelihood of surprise attack and lessen the demand for weapons; communication networks and links to provide exchange of information; declaration of peaceful intent to reduce tension; measures to provide for cooperation between military authorities in non-combat areas; and the creation of a regional Security Center.

Track Two mechanisms as exercised by SIPRI project is a creative way around several problems. It permits experts from the region and governments to put forward and consider ideas without necessarily having to adopt them as a policy before they have had a chance to develop their thoughts and see how others react. It also makes easier for officials from countries, which do not recognize each other to meet at academic session. 44 experts from 16 countries participated. Participants came from universities, research centers, policy making institutions, foreign affairs planning, arms control groups..etc. Some of them have military career and/or military background. The number participated from every country was: Egypt (7), Palestine (1), Canada (5), Japan (1), Tunisia (1), Saudi Arabia (1), AUA (1), Morocco (1), Turkey (1), Jordan (3), Sweden (11), Iran (2), USA (4), Israel (3), Brazil (1), Russia (1).³¹

4.2.6 Revisionism and Historical Conciliation

The concept of historical conciliation by revising the way of how we look to history and to past events, is an important element of confidence building. It is also essential for the process of reconstructing new relations. Initiatives in this direction coming from individuals, groups, or governments may generate debates and controversy, but it does not keep things as it was before. President Mubarak in his speech to the Egyptian people on the occasion of “Liberation of Sinai” (25 April 1982) touched strongly this point, he said “ If peace is an Egyptian interest, it is also in the interest of all countries of the region including the Israeli people, who wishes real security based on an equal cooperation, mutual confidence, and historical conciliation between the Arabs and the Israeli. Conciliation that puts an end for their confrontations, and to equate between the rights of the sons of the Profit Ibrahim, and to bring back peace to Jerusalem-the City of God- as place of brotherhood and friendship, above all biases of fanaticism, and wishes of violating the rights of others”.³²

To demonstrate how such process of revisionism and conciliation was acting in the Egyptian Israeli relations, four concrete cases will be reviewed. These cases are generated by individuals, groups, and official institutions with specific aim to send message of peace to the other side.

- In July 1995, during a diplomatic reception, the consul of Israeli in Berlin offered the belongings of an Egyptian soldier killed during October war 1973 to his homologue the Egyptian consul in Berlin. “Said Zakaria” the Egyptian soldier was dropped behind the front line in Sinai at the beginning of the war and was killed by an Israeli unit after fierce resistance. An Israeli soldier participated in the battle, and lives now in Berlin, has kept Zakaria’s private papers for twenty two years, and talked to the Israeli press about his courage and said that Zakaria deserves to be honored by the Egyptians. The story occupied wide attention in the Egyptian press, and the name of Zakaria was granted the Legion of honor in October 1996.³³

- In August 1995, a retired brigadier general Arye Biro, confessed publicly that he as a captain commander of an airborne platoon and his men have executed 49 Egyptians prisoners in the 1956 war, because he had been ordered to advance and did not have enough troops to guard the Egyptians. Also a leading military historian, Arye Yitzhaki of Bar-Ilan University accused an Israeli paratroop reconnaissance unit of killing 300-400 Egyptians who threw down their weapons in the Sinai campaign of 1967 war. The disclosures caused mixed reactions in Egypt, and in Israel. In Egypt they asked for official accounting as well as compensation for the families of every prisoner executed, while in Israel it triggered national debate and was considered as painful soul-searching by the Israelis who had always cherished the belief that their fight was for survival against overwhelming enemies. Such confessions have also certain dimension related to confidence building and healing the wounds of the past.³⁴

- Current reports refer to a quiet revolution in the teaching of Israeli history to most Israeli pupils. New, officially approved textbooks make plain that many of the most common Israeli beliefs are as much myth as fact. The new books do not speak about “the few against many” but say that it was the Israeli who had the military edge, and that the Palestinians in some cases were expelled by Israeli soldiers. The books freely use the term “Palestinians” to refer to a people and a nationalist movement, and refer to the Arabic name of the 1948 War “the Naqba or the Catastrophe”. Eyal Naveh, a history professor at Tel Aviv University and the author of one of the new text books, said that “only 10 years ago much of this was taboo”. The controversy that the “new history” approach has generated, reflects the wider disputes in Israel between those who favor more concessions to the Arabs and those who fear that such concessions place Israel’s legitimacy and its very existence at risk. The same reports refer to new books are being written by the Palestinian Education Ministry.³⁵ Egypt also has accommodated its education system to the requirements of peace since 1979 .

- Upon an Egyptian civil society initiative, peace groups from Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Palestine gathered in Denmark in January 1997 to formulate The International Alliance for Arab–Israeli Peace. The “ Copenhagen Declaration “ that came out of the meeting called for “people to people” dialogue to promote peace and reconciliation. Since then, the Alliance has been active through Media, meetings, and conferences to promote their goals; the last of which was in Cairo in July 1999.

4.2.7 Memorials of War

The 8th article of the special “Protocol of Israeli withdrawal and security arrangement” annexed to the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty indicates that both parties should keep the existing Memorials of War built in the memory of the other side soldiers in good

conditions. This includes the Israeli Memorial already built by Israel in Sinai, and the other one that Egypt will build in Israel". The Israeli Memorial is known by the local citizens as "The Dayan Rock" and is now one of the famous touristic sites in Sinai.

4.2.8 Joint Military Exercises

From confidence building perspective, joint military exercises strengthen ties between countries and between personnel of the forces involved. It progressively helps unify language and concepts required to carryout joint operations during war and peace. It happens that young officers participating in such exercises are soon promoted to higher ranks, and with time a large number of officers are used to work together, developing common experience and strong relations. Brotherhood in arms is well known as one of the most everlasting relations.

Staging joined exercises in the Mediterranean and in the Red Sea is considered important and necessary by the Egyptian defense planners for fostering security cooperation with other countries in the area. Joint exercises offer an opportunity to the participating countries to share expertise and information. The relations between Egypt and the rest of the Mediterranean countries mirror the current level of coordination in the fields of joint military training, experience exchange, and arms supply.

The Egyptian current program for air, land, and sea joint exercises adopted by Egypt reflects its interest to share experience and to build confidence with other Mediterranean partners. It is clear that the program expands in size and type of missions to serve the needs and interests of the participating countries. It also creates pronged relations with different security spheres like NATO, WEU, EU, and US. For example, the multilateral "Bright Star" series of joint exercises in which Egypt plays a principle role since 1983 is now considered as the largest joined exercises out side NATO, with 7 countries participating (US, Egypt, France, UK, Italy, Kuwait, and UAE), and 22 countries as observers. The size of the participating troops goes up to 85000 persons, 30% of it are Egyptian troops. In the last exercise (1997) the US's aircraft carrier George Washington and the American strategic bomber B-2 had participated. Within the scope of the whole exercise, some missions were conducted by cooperation of two countries. Egypt and Italy, for example, conducted together a rescue and humanitarian help operation. Also Egypt and UK exercised another rescue operation for an assumed large-scale earthquake disaster in the city of Alexandria. Losses were assumed to reach ten thousand inhabitants.³⁶

The "Cleopatra" series of Joint naval exercises are the largest maneuver and joint trainig performed in the Mediterranean Sea. Countries participating are Egypt, France, and Italy. It includes joint planning, war games, lectures, debates, and seminars. The principle naval missions exercised were terrorism fighting, rescue operations, fact-finding, ship inspection and monitoring. Egypt and France have started Cleopatra exercises in 1988, and then Italy participated in 1996.³⁷

The Egyptian assessment of joint training with other nationalities is extremely positive, and considered as an opportunity to work with multi-national forces that will be probably the type of war operations in the future. It also removes doubts, and promotes dialogue

and understanding. The Egyptian commanders, officers, and soldiers have succeeded to build a realistic image about “others” not only on military professional areas, but also on cultural and humanitarian aspects. In addition to that, a window for exchange of views about man-technology interactions, war in the desert, and other diverse security issues in the Mediterranean are opened.

Joined exercises with Israel is considered by Egypt as a hard security issue, and much related to final phases of the Peace Process. Field Marshal Tantawi said in an interview in the occasion of staging the “Bright Star” exercises “No problem for Israel to Join the “Bright Star” after completing the peace process in the Middle East.³⁸ An important step forward has been achieved in July 1999 by launching cooperative joint environmental exercises between Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority in the Red Sea.

Joined exercises should be seen as confidence building. The fragile security environment in the East Mediterranean was behind the negative perceptions shown by the majority of Arab states due to the Turkey-Israeli exercises in the Mediterranean. Egypt had shown moderate responses, and did not dramatize the event.

Table (2) Egyptian Joint Exercises with Mediterranean Partners and the US.

Name	Countries participating	Place	Remarks
Pollution treatment of sea waters exercise	Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Palestine	Aqaba Gulf	July 1999: under the supervision of the Israeli Ministry of Environment
Joint Egyptian-French naval exercise	Egypt, France	Red Sea	Dec. 1998: material supply, evacuation, Helicopters operations, base visits
Air-Land “Iron Cobra” exercise series.	United States, Egypt	Egypt	Oct. 1998: exercise No.7: mission planning, air-land operations, strategic transport.
“Cleopatra” naval exercise series	Egypt, France, Italy	Mediterranean Sea	Sept. 98: Mission planning, conferences, debates, war games, helicopter operations, terrorism fighting, rescue, fact finding, inspection, and monitoring. Operations started at 1988, Italy joined at 1996.
“Eagle Salute” air naval exercise series.	Egypt, United States	Red Sea	Conducted every year since 1991, missions conducted April 98: fact finding, inspection, monitoring.
Visit of the French naval tactical training group to Alexandria	Egypt, France	Med. Sea, Alexandria	Lectures, seminars, exchange of views.
“Bright Stars” joint air naval ground exercise series.	Egypt, US, Italy, UK, France, Kuwait, UAE	Egypt	Bi-annual since 1983, Nov. 98: 85000 troops, 7 countries participating, 22 observers from Asia, Africa and Europe. Naval, ground, and air operations

4.2.9 Multi-lateral Arms Control Efforts

Through out the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Israel have agreed to a variety of arms control and confidence building measures. However, measures adopted like disengagement of forces, demilitarization, limitation of forces, military-to-military contacts were limited to the aftermath of the hostilities. Until recently, however, the idea of exploring arms control possibilities in a broader context, as a mechanism for advancing regional security across the whole Middle East, was dismissed as being irrelevant. The various governments in the region have not been considered conducive to support concepts such as mutual, collective or cooperative security. They have pursued their national security interests primarily through the expansion and modernization of their military forces. There has been little recognition that arms control or reductions would serve either national or mutual interests.

Unlike the situation in Europe, most states in the Middle East face multiple threats to their security from their neighbors. No single balance of power exists in the region; instead, there are a number of overlapping balances of power at work. There are disparities in the force levels and structures of the armies in the region and massive asymmetries in the quantity and quality of weaponry possessed by states. The actions of states located at the periphery of the region, such as Turkey, India and Pakistan, have repercussions on all actors in the Middle East. These factors however serve to underline the pressing need to address security concerns in a regional context and not solely on bilateral basis.

The Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) marked the official launching of a regional arms control process, with the co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process, the United States and Russia. Unlike the other working groups, the attendance of states from outside the region has been restricted. Originally, Israel wanted only the two co-sponsors and the regional parties to participate. After the first round in May 1992, the membership was expanded to include Australia, Canada, China, India, Turkey, Ukraine, a representative from the European Union and representative from the EFTA countries. It was not until the third round, held in Washington in May 1993, that Israel agreed to the participation of the Palestinians and a delegation from the United Nations.³⁹

Giving the sharp differences in their threat perceptions and security concerns, the proposals and concepts presented by Israel and the Arab states have differed significantly, specially with respect to the question of nuclear weapons. The Arab states led by Egypt focused on the need to place the question of Israel's nuclear capability on the agenda. The Israeli approach was totally different and has centered on the necessity of developing a set of confidence building measures such as the prior notification of large scale military exercises and the development of hot-lines, crises prevention mechanisms and verification procedures. Restraints on strategic systems and the issue of nuclear weapons are seen as belonging to the last stage in the process.

The position of the United States stressed the need for an incremental approach to arms control, with some initial modest confidence building measures. The assessment of the United States is that the bilateral Arab-Israeli talks have not advanced sufficiently, for securing the cooperation of the states in serious efforts to control the spread of

conventional and non-conventional weapons in the region. Accordingly the May 1991 Bush arms control initiative for the Middle East had not been introduced for discussion in these talks.

The ACRS working group held four rounds of talks from September 1992 to November 1993; see Table (3). During the talks, consensus was reached on the need to expand the scope of the working group, to increase the frequency of contacts between the plenary sessions and to initiate a program of inter-sessional activities. In the fourth round (last round) it was decided to group the future activities into two separate baskets: an “operational basket”, concentrating on short term security and confidence building measures; and a “conceptual basket”, focusing on the longer term security issues facing the Middle East, and the over all aims and objectives of the arms control process. The talks on the “conceptual basket” covered three sessions, with the aim to provide framework for drafting a set of principles which will govern the nature of the security relations among the Middle East states. The conceptual basket has also focused on developing ideas for new institutions and mechanisms to provide for security and cooperation in the Middle East.

(1) The operational Basket:

Within the framework of the operational Basket three sessions have been held; March 1994 to April 1995. The activities have centered on developing practical steps for cooperation on maritime issues, communications, and the exchange of military information. Summary of activities in the three issues is given in Table (4).

(2) The Conceptual Basket:

The first meeting of the ACRS “conceptual basket” held in Cairo, February 1994, was devoted to the drawing up of a “declaration of principles on Arms Control and Regional Security”. The parties succeeded to finalize draft text consisting of three parts:

A set of principles governing future security relations among states in the region.

A set of guidelines to direct arms control process.

A statement of the long-term aims of the ACRS talks.

During the second meeting in Jordan, November 1994, the parties did not succeed to narrow their differences, in particular, between Israel and Egypt over the inclusion of a statement on Weapons of Mass Destruction. In addition, Egypt threatened to withdraw its support for the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) unless Israel became a signatory to the NPT and open up its nuclear facilities to international inspection. However, towards the end of 1995, there were signs that both Egypt and Israel were eager to put their differences behind them: President Mubarak announced that Egypt would desist from pressurizing Israel to join the NPT until a settlement with Syria had been reached. Also Shimon Peres, Prime Minister of Israel had publicly hinted that in the context of a regional peace agreement with all Arab states Israel would be prepared to forgo its nuclear deterrent. Nevertheless, the nuclear issue continued to bedevil the deliberations of the working group on the Declaration of Principles. It was clear that after three years of talks by the group there was not any tangible outcome. Egypt’s disenchantment with the lack of specific achievements and the missing of an overall focus of ACRS led to the postponement of the following meetings.

Though the parties have failed to put their signatures on a Declaration of Principles on arms control and regional security in the Middle East, considerable areas of common ground have been found in the drafting of the text. Likewise, the agreement to establish a regional security center and a telecommunications network represents a shared recognition of developing institutional frameworks and new mechanisms in order to reinforce cooperative security arrangements in the Middle East. The existence of the ACRS working group represented in itself an important confidence building measure, and it was a significant first step in facilitating communication among the parties, and developing a new common strategic culture in the Middle East.

Table (3): Round Talks of ACRS and Inter-sessional Activities

Round	Date	Form	Activity
First	May 11-14, 1992, Washington, DC.	Seminar	Familiarization of US-Soviet and European experience in arms control and confidence building measures
Second	Sept. 15-17 1992, Moscow	Seminar	
Third	May 18-20, 1992, Washington DC.	Review meeting, planning.	<p>(1) Program of inter-sessional activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Joint visits to an airbase in the UK, military communication facility in The Hague, observation of a NATO military exercises in Denmark. <p>(2) Program of workshops on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verification mechanisms, communication measures, exchange of military information, prior notification of military exercises, long term arms control objectives and declaratory measures, maritime measures. <p>(3) Program for other activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compilation and analysis of arms control proposals for the Middle East. ● Analysis of various confidence building measures associated with arms control. ● Geographical scope of plans for arms control and regional security measures in the middle East. ● Study the possibility of a center of conflict prevention in the region.
Fourth	Nov.2-3, 1993, Moscow	Review meeting, planning	<p>Review of activities. Program of future activities in two tracks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Operational basket: Short-term security and CBMs. ● Conceptual basket: Long-term confidence building security issues, over all aims and objectives of the arms control process.

Table (4): The Operational Basket

1 st Session March 1994 Maritime Issues	2 nd Session Nov. 1994 Communications	3 rd Session April 1995 Exchange of Mil. Inform.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing a number of maritime CBMs. ▪ Drafting two documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preventing accidents at sea INCSEA, - Maritime Search and Rescue Operations SAR. ▪ Canada hosted a Meeting of senior naval Officers from the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up of an ACRS communication network operational in March 1995 using facilities in the Hague with two end user stations in Cairo and Tel Aviv. ▪ Preparation of tech. specs. of the network permanent hub in Cairo. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drafting 4 documents on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notification of certain military exercises. - Exchange of the curriculum vitae of senior military officers. - Exchange of unclassified military publications. - Voluntary invitations to visit defense installations. Israel has extended an Invitation to all Participants to visit one of its military installations.

3.2.10 Unilateral CBMs in the Egyptian arms control policies

The Egyptian posture in ACRS is justified by its arms control policies which included major unilateral steps as CBMs. First, although Egypt has failed to curtail the Israeli nuclear arsenal through its peace process with Israel, Egypt ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1982, and in 1986 froze all nuclear peaceful programs. Second, Egypt has pursued through different international forums the idea of establishing NWFZ in the Middle East. Third, during the Paris Conference on Chemical Weapons in January 1989, Egypt supported the multilateral efforts to impose a total ban on Chemical Weapons (CWs), and asked the chemical weapons convention to include effective security guarantees for its members, not just against the use or the threat of use of Chemical Weapons but of any weapons of mass destruction. Countries which possessed nuclear weapons, including Israel, refused this link. The Egyptian position was based on a plan proposed by President Mubarak calling for ridding the Middle East of all Weapons of Mass Destruction. Fourth, Egypt worked hard to establish a NWFZ in Africa that was finally signed in Cairo on April 12, 1996. The African zone includes all Arab countries in North Africa.⁴⁰

The Tokyo Forum on “Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament” has recently recognized in his final report (July 1999) the linkage between the peace process in the Middle East and the elimination of Weapons of Mass Destruction, and called for the revitalization of the Arab-Israeli peace process. The report also urged all states in the region to join the NPT, ratify the CTBT, accept IAEA safeguards. The Forum called Israel to shut down its unsafeguarded nuclear reactor at Dimona or immediately subject it to international safeguards.⁴¹

5. Enhancing Existing Confidence Building Measures: Concluding Remarks

All the above shows, contrary to the popular view, that the contemporary Mediterranean region has a rich experience in security arrangements and CBMs. In what concerns the elaboration of the Mediterranean Charter, the real value of such experience is to give the Charter a realistic starting reference point, and to provide it with models and inspirations for the future. It also helps in narrowing the gap separating different points of views on the role of the Charter in the EMP and its field of action. The experience of the multinational intervention in the Gulf War and in the Balkan has proved that full bodied sense of partnership can not practically achieved without the presence of well defined security dimensions. In today's world, the economic, cultural and military dimensions of security cannot be separated.

The process of the Charter elaboration should recognize the Mediterranean region' needs to act quickly against pressures created not only by demographic, economic and environmental changes, but also by dangers arising from unrestrained conventional and unconventional arms race. The Middle East states spend a disproportional amount of resources on conventional arms, that affects negatively their social and economic development plans. The Charter should activate past dialogues in this regard, and encourage states of the region to discuss with each other their threat perceptions, doctrines and reasons why they acquire various conventional weapons. Such measures might also include encouraging compliance with UN Register of Conventional Arms.

The Charter with its conflict prevention character should also realize the destabilizing impact of the introduction of ballistic missiles and anti-ballistic missile systems by some states of the region, combined with command and control space assets. Military commanders-faced with such level of offensive integration- might find themselves obliged to adopt strategies of preemption or launch at first sign of warning. In this regard CBMs might be devised –at least at the beginning- to include pre-notification of launches, range limitations, capping of stocks and transparency measures.

Non-proliferation of Mass Destruction Weapons should also be discussed in the global and regional security context. EMP should develop measures to prevent any secret nuclear development or clandestine nuclear trade, and to strengthen the IAEA's effective safeguard systems. Peaceful use of nuclear energy may become an area of cooperation. This should be seen in relation to both nuclear non-proliferation and the development of civilian nuclear power. Sharing experience in nuclear waste management, measures for nuclear safety and other peaceful advanced nuclear research might be the beginning to think about establishing a Euro-Mediterranean mechanism for nuclear energy. An effort like that can contribute in shaping another mode of contact between scientists working in such sensitive fields.

Food supply problems can be also seen as an area of common work and confidence building. Developments in genetic engineering and research in agricultural problems represent an important area of cooperation. The Egyptian-Israeli example is a case in the point. The work in food security provides an output that affects directly a wide spectrum of population. Such an effort can be complemented with sharing activities in domestic humanitarian-relief problems. Challenges of this sort already faced the Mediterranean countries during the last Kosovo War, and most recently after the Earthquake tragedy in Turkey. One of the main operations launched during the last multilateral joint exercises

“Bright Stars” staged in Egypt (1997) was to exercise a rescue operation for an assumed large-scale earthquake disaster in the city of Alexandria with assumed losses of ten thousand inhabitants.

Concluding, it should be emphasized that the corner stone of the past confidence building experience and of its potential enhancement in the future is the Arab–Israeli peace process that allowed for unilateral, bilateral and multilateral steps in the issue areas of security and confidence building. These efforts allowed the process to go forward from the Egyptian–Israeli peace to include another Israeli– Jordanian peace, the Oslo process, and to stand the down turn in the Israeli politics during the Netanyahu era. The process has produced concepts of demilitarized zones, limited deployment of forces, different forms of political, economic, and cultural CBMS, in addition to institutions such as the MFO and ACRS; all of which are generated from the peculiarities of the regional environment.

However, these accomplishments continued to be linked to the ups and downs of the peace process that was highly threatened by the Israeli several invasions of Lebanon, terrorist attacks from Palestinian and Israeli extremists, and the ideological nature of the Israeli government. The lesson that could be learned from the past is that the peace process and security and arms control measures are mutually enhancing in the positive and negative directions. Therefore, it is important to invigorate the process to achieve peace and security for all concerned parties. CBMs could not stand alone or achieve what the political process could not achieve, but rather it could contribute for maximizing the gains from the political process and providing a safety net on the times of crisis.

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