



Reducing Military Tensions, Building Trust

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Overview



- Politics is King
- Benefits of Mil-to-Mil Relations
- Challenges to Mil-to-Mil Relations
- Requirements for Mil-to-Mil Relations
- Mil-to-Mil Relations and Space
- Outcomes



Politics is King



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- Context matters for Mil-to-Mil relations – politics matters.
- Paradox is that when Mil-to-Mil relations are most needed they tend to be very difficult to achieve.
- Yet Mil-to-Mil relations are often easier to achieve than arms control and other large diplomatic measures.
- However, ultimate success of Mil-to-Mil relations is utterly dependent on goodwill among political masters on both sides.



Benefits of Mil-to-Mil Relations



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- Engenders professional respect between both sides.
- Exposes both sides to each other's values, standards, and culture.
- Over time such exposure engenders mutual respect, trust, and useful professional back channel contacts.
- In turn, Mil-to-Mil relations leads to both sides having better understanding of each other's doctrine, overall capabilities, and intentions.



Challenges to Mil-to-Mil Relations



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- Tendency by some to see Mil-to-Mil relations as a reward for 'good behavior'.
- Impatience by one side or both for quick results.
- The need to maintain classified programs while managing Mil-to-Mil relations.
- Cultural and political misperceptions, stereotypes, and misunderstandings.



Requirements for Mil-to-Mil Relations



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- Acknowledgement that 'Jaw-jaw is better than war-war' regardless of circumstances.
- Patience, commitment, cultural and political awareness, and a sense of humor.
- Realistic expectations – Mil-to-Mil relations cannot be expected to resolve underlying political problems.
- Frequent contact at various levels.
- Mutual professional respect.



Mil-to-Mil Relations and Space



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- Exchanges among space officers at war and staff colleges.
- Regular meetings/discussions at senior officer level.
- Mil-to-Mil technical committees on issues of mutual concern.
- Visits to each other's facilities and conferences.
- Data exchanges on issues of mutual concern (e.g. shared early warning, SSA).
- 'Hot Line' communications between senior commanders to manage potential crises.
- Exposure to each other's doctrine, standards, and service cultures.



Outcomes



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- Mutual respect and trust.
- Greater transparency and educated insight into intentions.
- Useful back channel contacts and communication.
- Development of plausible TCBM's.
- Over time, along with other initiatives, can help build enough trust and goodwill to tackle larger differences at political level.

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