We Produce the Future

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

• 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

• 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.
The Intellectual and Leadership Center of the Air Force

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One Faculty Member at a Time

One Idea at a Time