

large-scale mobile, deep attack philosophies. The consequences of these two developments are very complex but several points relevant to Confidence-Building are worth making.

First, the American adoption of the AirLand Battle Concept can easily be seen by the Soviets and their WTO allies to be threatening in ways that earlier NATO doctrines were not. The explicit discussion of large-scale, deep attack, conventional counter-offensives is a considerably more aggressive posture than those considered in "active defence" or "forward defence." Indeed, it captures the essence of Soviet fears as articulated in the "second image" of Soviet perceptions and beliefs (the image in which the Soviet Union viewed the United States and the NATO allies as fundamentally aggressive and dangerous foes). Under these circumstances, if the image corresponds even loosely to reality, then the Soviet Union might very well be interested in Constraint CBMs that would reduce their concerns about sudden American or wider NATO attacks in Central Europe. Although less clearly a dominant feature in "Image Three" and "Image Four" (where the Soviet Union is concerned about but considerably less fearful of American or wider NATO attacks), the anxiety generated by the explicit espousal of very aggressive American plans like AirLand Battle could also produce incentives to negotiate Constraint CBMs, particularly if no unilateral Soviet solution seemed likely to be as effective. Whether or not such reluctant Soviet "enthusiasm" would actually be generated by AirLand Battle is truly difficult to say, especially given the Soviet penchant for "solving" defence problems unilaterally, regardless of cost.

A serious potential problem suggested by this look at AirLand Battle and Soviet Operational Manoeuvre Groups has ominous consequences for Eurocentric CBM prospects. The two principals in the NATO-WTO relationship may be so heavily committed (for many complex reasons) to generating *essentially unilateral (as opposed to co-operative) doctrinal and technological solutions to their conventional balance problems* – and their respective solutions may be so interactive – that *neither side will feel safe in considering – nor be seriously interested in exploring – Confidence-Building or other arms control-type solutions.* A related point of more relevance to the West is the possibility that NATO – or, more particu-

larly, the United States – *may become so enamoured of fundamentally offensive solutions like the AirLand Battle Concept and the even more aggressive AirLand 2000 Concept that it will have no real choice but to oppose meaningful Constraint CBMs because they would seriously impair U.S. and NATO flexibility and responsiveness.* Despite the increased risk associated with the conventional military policies of both the East and the West, the WTO and NATO may now be trapped in a paradoxical relationship where (assuming neither planned immediate attack) *both would benefit from meaningful Constraint CBMs but neither feels it can now surrender the flexibility and responsiveness that their risky, manoeuvre-oriented policies would appear to demand.*

This discussion of AirLand Battle and Soviet Operational Manoeuvre Groups can also be viewed as part of a larger debate in the West about how best to deal with Soviet and WTO capabilities and doctrine in Central Europe. The primary question, from a Western perspective, has been whether a conventional defence of Western Europe (and, therefore, conventional deterrence) is possible. Although at the risk of serious oversimplification, one can nevertheless say that this debate has revolved around assessments of technological and mobility solutions to the present, perceived weaknesses of Western conventional forces in Europe.⁹¹ The specifics of this ongoing debate warrant at least brief consideration here because they suggest yet another perspective to use in understanding the East-West military balance and the nature of Soviet conventional military policy. This perspective, as usual, also entails certain consequences for Confidence-Building.

In one sense, the official American adoption of the AirLand Battle Concept prejudices the direction of the "debate" about appropriate Western conventional military policy in Europe. It represents at least the partial victory of "manoeuvre advocates" over "positional advocates." Nevertheless, the debate continues in academic and professional military circles and the eventual resolution is far from clear, especially given the emergence of increasingly significant political and economic constraints, both within the United States and in Europe. The essence of the debate concerns the dual claim (most closely associated with Mearsheimer) that (a) NATO can (or could, with modest adjustments to relatively traditional positional defence doctrines) provide an adequate con-

