

larly by academic analysts, but its ramifications seldom attract even casual attention. This is regrettable because the habits of thought reflecting this quite natural incapacity to deal effectively with uncertainty and complexity play havoc with our attempts to understand and control very important national security problems.

There is an almost universal characteristic of defence policy analysis or strategic studies that reflects this incapacity perfectly. Analytic assessments of strategic studies-type phenomena – particularly but not exclusively academic analyses – can almost always be categorized as being either “hawkish” or “dovish”, “liberal” or “conservative”. These two basic “ways” of looking at, for instance, arms control issues, deterrence policies, strategic weapon system acquisition decisions or conventional military balance questions each contain a virtually complete if radically simplified set of assumptions about the operation of nuclear and conventional deterrence, the nature and intentions of the Soviet Union (and the United States, if only implicitly), and the suitable criteria by which to evaluate military doctrine and weapon systems. These two ways of seeing the larger strategic reality are in most respects incompatible with each other. “Hawks” and “Doves” can address the same basic issues but their terms of reference are sufficiently different that they rarely deal with anything approaching the “same” problem.⁶⁸ Viewed from within its own set of assumptions, each position is defensible and sensible. Of equal importance, each in its own way simplifies dangerously the character of the “real” world that it seeks to represent and explain. No careful examination of the strategic studies literature can fail to reveal these two “paradigms” of strategic reality. They are inter-

esting and illuminating not only because of their own substance *but also because they demonstrate the profound ways in which our understanding of important policy problems is the captive of styles of thought and frequently implicit models of how the world operates.* In short, academic analysts persistently distort the complex “reality” of the Soviet-American politico-military relationship. They do so by employing one of several drastically simplified conceptual models of that relationship and how it works. Policy makers are generally not as diligent in consistently employing “world-view” models. Practical demands of time, the frequent need to construct consensus, and a greater tolerance for ambiguity (as well, perhaps, as a healthy skepticism about elaborate academic constructions) buffer them against the more exotic varieties of conceptual distortion. On the other hand, policy makers fall prey to all kinds of smaller-scale distortions produced by the normal, everyday operation of cognitive processing.⁶⁹ There are two consequences associated with the “problem of oversimplification” that are relevant specifically to the analysis of Confidence-Building Measures. The first is quite direct. It has to do with the very natural tendency (noted above) of analysts to organize their thinking with the aid of relatively primitive and simplified models when their subject matter is complex, uncertain, “fuzzy” or “messy”. The environment in which CBMs are supposed to work – the WTO-NATO military relationship – is a just such a complex and “fuzzy” subject matter. It should be quite clear that CBMs can be properly understood (their limits and prospects appreciated) only when the WTO-NATO context is understood in something approaching its full complexity. It is, after all, that context that has cre-

⁶⁸ Probably the most compelling illustration of this point is the way in which “Hawks” and “Doves” configure discussions of strategic nuclear deterrence. “Hawks” freely consider ways of minimizing damage should deterrence fail while “Doves” steer clear of such “after-failure” questions for fear that deterrence will be undermined if such “precautions” are taken. Judgements about the “adequacy” of assured destruction-type policies will also vary according to strategic world view. Similarly, assessments of the utility of hard-target counter-force strategic weapons look very different depending upon which perspective is employed. Virtually all strategic studies issues possess a similar “dual character”.

⁶⁹ It is worth noting that academic policy analysts almost always adopt and retain a simplified version of one policy “reality” (that of a “hawk” or a “dove”) whereas most policy makers tend to combine sometimes inconsistent features of both archetypical conceptual models, depending upon how the current reality “looks” and what part of a policy problem is most visible and troubling at that particular time. Truly doctrinaire policy makers – absolute “hawks” or “doves” – are quite rare.

