

any war in Europe, and thereby establish the conditions under which success of Front and army-subordinated OMG operations would be virtually assured. Warsaw Pact military writers acknowledge that the OMG can succeed only in a benign air and anti-air environment.<sup>83</sup>

There were two reasons for discussing the major advances in Soviet tactical airpower, the more incremental improvements in artillery and armour, and the emergence of Operational Manoeuvre Groups in Soviet operational planning. The first was to illustrate the point that it is quite easy to paint a grim and very threatening picture of Soviet conventional military capabilities and (apparent) intentions. This has serious implications for those discussions of Confidence-Building that tend to discount or ignore the particularly aggressive character of Soviet conventional military capabilities and (possible) intentions. Bluntly, the implicitly "benign" interpretation that seems to underlie much of the Confidence-Building literature may simply be incorrect. At minimum, it is almost certainly too simplistic and, probably, too optimistic. As suggested earlier, there are many plausible interpretations or "images" of the current Soviet "situation" and at least some of them are distinctly antagonistic to any reasonable use of CBMs. Many others are ambiguous as far as supporting significant Confidence-Building Measures is concerned. Responsible analysis and policy making must address this fact. Too often, it does not.

An equally important reason for examining this less benign perspective with its explicit consideration of Soviet capabilities and potential intentions has been to suggest that a thorough knowledge of the Soviet position *might* help to identify useful and genuinely constructive Confidence-Building proposals *as well as their useful limits*. The careful identification of the most threatening aspects of a potential adversary's capabilities is a logical route to pursue in constructing practical CBMs. This very brief preceding discussion of recent developments in Soviet conventional military thinking suggests, for instance, that the common Western concentration on Soviet tanks, tank forma-

tions and tank tactics is not necessarily the only sound approach to reducing Western fears of surprise attack. Certain facets of Soviet tactical air power might be a more relevant subject for CBM constraints as well as, perhaps, other assets (such as Alford's bridging equipment) which would facilitate the rapid insertion of OMGs into the NATO rear. *At least as likely and far less optimistic, however, is the possible conclusion that Soviet conventional force structure and operational planning in Europe depend upon such carefully integrated capabilities that Constraint CBMs may be neither technically feasible (i.e. there may be no special or particular equipment or deployment limit that will actually constrain Soviet "surprise attack options") nor acceptable to a defence-through-offense conscious Soviet Union. After all, if the Soviets genuinely believe that this type of defence is necessary and effective – to either attack NATO by surprise or to pre-empt a NATO attack against the WTO – they will be reluctant to impair the carefully developed, painstakingly balanced, and elaborately integrated character of that defence. This is a conclusion that is rarely, if ever, considered in discussions of Confidence-Building – probably because the character of Soviet conventional military forces is rarely addressed as an explicit feature of analysis.*

*The crucial failing that animates the Type One Generic Flaw in Confidence-Building thinking and the Confidence-Building literature is inadequate assessments of Soviet conventional military forces and of the nature of the threat that they actually pose. The obvious ramification of this failing is an inadequate understanding of CBM possibilities. In looking at the aggressive characterization of Soviet conventional doctrine and capabilities outlined above, we see an image of the Soviet Union that very well might not be seriously interested in Constraint CBMs. However, the point of this critique is not that the Soviet Union is, in fact, indifferent to the virtues of Confidence-Building and is, instead, intent on invading Europe at the earliest feasible opportunity. Although this may be true, the larger point is that there are many possible interpretations of the true Soviet situation and, necessarily, differing evaluations of the real opportunities for Confidence-Building Measures. Indeed, this section is designed to suggest the flavour of these*

<sup>83</sup> Hines and Peterson, "The Warsaw Pact Strategic Offensive — the OMG in Context", *International Defense Review*, no. 10, 1983, p. 1395.

