

view of decision, regardless of how many psychological embellishments are added. The second group, on the other hand, places (in many cases, at least) cognitive understanding of mental functioning at the heart of its understanding of decision-making. The competing perspectives or approaches that Allison initially identified – “Bureaucratic Politics” and “Organizational Process” – remain of interest to analysts but they have receded to become parts (sometimes lumped together) of what Steinbruner has called the “context of decision” – no longer paradigm-level perspectives but rather features of the environment in which decisions occur.⁹⁹

Given Confidence-Building’s association with decision-making and given the existence of two competitive explanatory decision-making paradigms, it is worth asking whether Confidence-Building can also be conceptualized in terms of contrasting, competitive sets of process assumptions – rational and cognitive.¹⁰⁰ Bearing in mind the point of this section, we can examine the set of Confidence-Building categories developed earlier in this study and note the degree to which they appear to be dependent upon rational and/or cognitive assumptions. This may help us to understand why such naive and poorly developed assumptions about the process of creating “confidence” operate within the Confidence-Building literature. This exercise is scarcely intended to be definitive. Rather, it is exploratory and suggestive, intended to illustrate why the Type Two Generic Flaw matters and what sort of research ought to be conducted in order to explore these cognitive limitations further.

Chapter Five concluded by developing a comprehensive set of CBM categories that appeared to encompass the full range of Confidence-Building proposals. They are reproduced below with a very brief observation about the presumed operational “mechanism” underlying them.

CBMs and Rational Assumptions

(A) – Information and Communication Measures

- (1) Information Measures (the exchange and publication of technical information about military forces).

The presumption here is completely straightforward: The more that potential adversaries know about each other – their capabilities, habits, concerns, doctrines, statements about intentions, etc. – the more they will come to understand the position and concerns of the other. As a consequence, they will be less inclined to employ “worst case” assumptions about the other in their planning, be less likely to misunderstand what the other is doing and less likely to engage in behaviour that they know will elicit negative reactions on the part of their adversaries. The goal is to improve the level of knowledge about and the predictability of potential adversaries. This, it is expected (hoped), will counter the destructive effects of misperception, uncertainty and ethnocentrism. This is a clear expression of a rational outlook (rationalism) and rational objectives although the “thing” being subjected to rational expectations is clearly a “psychological phenomenon”. Although (or perhaps because) Information CBMs are the most basic of the Confidence-Building Measures, the pattern of “rational objective, cognitive object” repeats throughout all examples.

- (2) Communication Measures (“Hot Lines”).

Although related to the basic Information CBM, this category is more restricted and “pragmatic”. The capac-

⁹⁸ This basic division is discussed in John Steinbruner’s *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision*. Steinbruner terms these two fundamental trends the “Analytic Paradigm” and the “Cognitive Paradigm”, with the former representing non-normative rational models of decision. In many ways, this book is at least as thought-provoking as Allison’s and certainly worth reading. In terms of this study, its greatest value lies in the central role it accords various cognitive phenomena in explaining how people “really” make decisions and interpret information.

⁹⁹ See Janice Gross Stein and Raymond Tanter, *Rational Decision-Making: Israel’s Security Choices, 1967* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980), pp. 3-87 (especially pp. 23-62) for a good overview of these perspectives.

¹⁰⁰ The identification of “animating process assumptions” is the closest that we can come to discovering actual “models” of the Confidence-Building process at this stage.

